BFWG
Sybil Campbell Collection
Formerly Crosby Hall Library

The Library of

Crosby Hall

Presented by

MISS M. LUMSDEN

1686

821
BRO

ROBERT BROWNING'S

POETICAL WORKS

v. 3

Robert Browning.

1835.

London Published by Smith Elder & Co. 15. Waterloo Place.

PIPPA PASSES

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES

THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES

A SOUL'S TRAGEDY

BY

ROBERT BROWNING

LONDON
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE
1889

CONTENTS.

PAGE

PIPPA PASSES 1

INTRODUCTION 5

PART I. MORNING 14

„ II. NOON 34

„ III. EVENING 51

„ IV. NIGHT 66

KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES 81

FIRST YEAR, 1730—

KING VICTOR. PART I. 85

KING VICTOR. PART II. 101

SECOND YEAR, 1731—

KING CHARLES. PART I. 128

KING CHARLES. PART II. 148

175

PAGE

THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES 167

ACT I. 169

„ II. 187

„ III. 204

„ IV. 220

„ V. 236

A SOUL'S TRAGEDY 257

ACT I. 259

„ II. 278

PIPPA PASSES;

A DRAMA.

I DEDICATE MY BEST INTENTIONS, IN THIS POEM,
ADMIRINGLY TO THE AUTHOR OF 'ION,'
AFFECTIONATELY TO MR. SERGEANT TALFOURD

R. B.

LONDON: 1841.

PERSONS.

FIPPA.
OTTIMA.
SEBALD.
Foreign Students
GOTTLIEB.
SCHRAMM.
JULES.
PHENE.
Austrian Police.
BLUPHOCKS.
LUIGI *and his* Mother.
Poor Girls.
MONSIGNOR *and his Attendants.*

PIPPA PASSES.

1841.

INTRODUCTION.

NEW YEAR'S DAY AT ASOLO IN THE TREVISAN.

SCENE.—*A large mean airy chamber. A girl,* PIPPA, *from the Silk-mills, springing out of bed.*

DAY!
Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last:
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and suppressed it lay,
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the world.

Oh, Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
A mite of my twelve hours' treasure,
The least of thy gazes or glances,
(Be they grants thou art bound to or gifts above measure)
One of thy choices or one of thy chances,
(Be they tasks God imposed thee or freaks at thy pleasure)
—My Day, if I squander such labour or leisure,
Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!

Thy long blue solemn hours serenely flowing,
Whence earth, we feel, gets steady help and good—
Thy fitful sunshine-minutes, coming, going,
As if earth turned from work in gamesome mood—
All shall be mine! But thou must treat me not
As prosperous ones are treated, those who live
At hand here, and enjoy the higher lot,
In readiness to take what thou wilt give,
And free to let alone what thou refusest;
For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest
Me, who am only Pippa,—old-year's sorrow.
Cast off last night, will come again to-morrow:
Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I shall borrow
Sufficient strength of thee for new-year's sorrow.
All other men and women that this earth
Belongs to, who all days alike possess,

Make general plenty cure particular dearth,
Get more joy one way, if another, less:
Thou art my single day, God lends to leaven
What were all earth else, with a feel of heaven,—
Sole light that helps me through the year, thy sun's!
Try now! Take Asolo's Four Happiest Ones—
And let thy morning rain on that superb
Great haughty Ottima; can rain disturb
Her Sebald's homage? All the while thy rain
Beats fiercest on her shrub-house window-pane,
He will but press the closer, breathe more warm
Against her cheek; how should she mind the storm?
And, morning past, if mid-day shed a gloom
O'er Jules and Phene,—what care bride and groom
Save for their dear selves? 'T is their marriage-day;
And while they leave church and go home their way,
Hand clasping hand, within each breast would be
Sunbeams and pleasant weather spite of thee.
Then, for another trial, obscure thy eve
With mist,—will Luigi and his mother grieve—
The lady and her child, unmatched, forsooth,
She in her age, as Luigi in his youth,
For true content? The cheerful town, warm, close
And safe, the sooner that thou art morose,
Receives them. And yet once again, outbreak
In storm at night on Monsignor, they make

Such stir about,—whom they expect from Rome
To visit Asolo, his brothers' home,
And say here masses proper to release
A soul from pain,—what storm dares hurt his peace?
Calm would he pray, with his own thoughts to ward
Thy thunder off, nor want the angels' guard.
But Pippa—just one such mischance would spoil
Her day that lightens the next twelvemonth's toil
At wearisome silk-winding, coil on coil!
And here I let time slip for nought!
Aha, you foolhardy sunbeam, caught
With a single splash from my ewer!
You that would mock the best pursuer,
Was my basin over-deep?
One splash of water ruins you asleep,
And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits
Wheeling and counterwheeling,
Reeling, broken beyond healing:
Now grow together on the ceiling!
That will task your wits.
Whoever it was quenched fire first, hoped to see
Morsel after morsel flee
As merrily, as giddily . . .
Meantime, what lights my sunbeam on,
Where settles by degrees the radiant cripple?
Oh, is it surely blown, my martagon?

New-blown and ruddy as St. Agnes' nipple,
Plump as the flesh-bunch on some Turk bird's poll!
Be sure if corals, branching 'neath the ripple
Of ocean, bud there,—fairies watch unroll
Such turban-flowers; I say, such lamps disperse
Thick red flame through that dusk green universe!
I am queen of thee, floweret!
And each fleshy blossom
Preserve I not—(safer
Than leaves that embower it,
Or shells that embosom)
—From weevil and chafer?
Laugh through my pane then; solicit the bee;
Gibe him, be sure; and, in midst of thy glee,
Love thy queen, worship me!

—Worship whom else? For am I not, this day,
Whate'er I please? What shall I please to-day?
My morn, noon, eve and night—how spend my day?
To-morrow I must be Pippa who winds silk,
The whole year round, to earn just bread and milk:
But, this one day, I have leave to go,
And play out my fancy's fullest games;
I may fancy all day—and it shall be so—
That I taste of the pleasures, am called by the names
Of the Happiest Four in our Asolo!

See! Up the hill-side yonder, through the morning,
Some one shall love me, as the world calls love:
I am no less than Ottima, take warning!
The gardens, and the great stone house above,
And other house for shrubs, all glass in front,
Are mine; where Sebald steals, as he is wont,
To court me, while old Luca yet reposes:
And therefore, till the shrub-house door uncloses,
I . . . what now?—give abundant cause for prate
About me—Ottima, I mean—of late,
Too bold, too confident she 'll still face down
The spitefullest of talkers in our town.
How we talk in the little town below!
But love, love, love—there 's better love, I know!
This foolish love was only day's first offer;
I choose my next love to defy the scoffer:
For do not our Bride and Bridegroom sally
Out of Possagno church at noon?
Their house looks over Orcana valley:
Why should not I be the bride as soon
As Ottima? For I saw, beside,
Arrive last night that little bride—
Saw, if you call it seeing her, one flash
Of the pale snow-pure cheek and black bright tresses,
Blacker than all except the black eyelash;
I wonder she contrives those lids no dresses!

—So strict was she, the veil
Should cover close her pale
Pure cheeks—a bride to look at and scarce touch,
Scarce touch, remember, Jules! For are not such
Used to be tended, flower-like, every feature,
As if one's breath would fray the lily of a creature?
A soft and easy life these ladies lead:
Whiteness in us were wonderful indeed.
Oh, save that brow its virgin dimness,
Keep that foot its lady primness,
Let those ankles never swerve
From their exquisite reserve,
Yet have to trip along the streets like me,
All but naked to the knee!
How will she ever grant her Jules a bliss
So startling as her real first infant kiss?
Oh, no—not envy, this!

—Not envy, sure!—for if you gave me
Leave to take or to refuse,
In earnest, do you think I'd choose
That sort of new love to enslave me?
Mine should have lapped me round from the beginning;
As little fear of losing it as winning:
Lovers grow cold, men learn to hate their wives,
And only parents' love can last our lives.

At eve the Son and Mother, gentle pair,
Commune inside our turret: what prevents
My being Luigi? While that mossy lair
Of lizards through the winter-time is stirred
With each to each imparting sweet intents
For this new-year, as brooding bird to bird—
(For I observe of late, the evening walk
Of Luigi and his mother, always ends
Inside our ruined turret, where they talk,
Calmer than lovers, yet more kind than friends)
—Let me be cared about, kept out of harm,
And schemed for, safe in love as with a charm;
Let me be Luigi! If I only knew
What was my mother's face—my father, too!
Nay, if you come to that, best love of all
Is God's; then why not have God's love befall
Myself as, in the palace by the Dome,
Monsignor?—who to-night will bless the home
Of his dead brother; and God bless in turn
That heart which beats, those eyes which mildly burn
With love for all men! I, to-night at least,
Would be that holy and beloved priest.

Now wait!—even I already seem to share
In God's love: what does New-year's hymn declare?
What other meaning do these verses bear?

All service ranks the same with God:
If now, as formerly he trod
Paradise, his presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.

Say not "a small event!" Why "small"?
Costs it more pain that this, ye call
A "great event," should come to pass,
Than that? Untwine me from the mass
Of deeds which make up life, one deed
Power shall fall short in or exceed!

And more of it, and more of it!—oh yes—
I will pass each, and see their happiness,
And envy none—being just as great, no doubt,
Useful to men, and dear to God, as they!
A pretty thing to care about
So mightily, this single holiday!
But let the sun shine! Wherefore repine?
—With thee to lead me, O Day of mine,
Down the grass path grey with dew,
Under the pine-wood, blind with boughs,
Where the swallow never flew
Nor yet cicala dared carouse—
No, dared carouse! [*She enters the street.*

PART I

MORNING.

SCENE.—*Up the Hill-side, inside the Shrub-house.* LUCA'S *wife,* OTTIMA, *and her paramour, the German* SEBALD.

Sebald [*sings*].

Let the watching lids wink!
Day 's a-blaze with eyes, think!
Deep into the night, drink!

Ottima. Night? Such may be your Rhine-land nights perhaps;
But this blood-red beam through the shutter's chink
—We call such light, the morning: let us see!
Mind how you grope your way, though! How these tall
Naked geraniums straggle! Push the lattice
Behind that frame!—Nay, do I bid you?—Sebald,
It shakes the dust down on me! Why, of course
The slide-bolt catches. Well, are you content,
Or must I find you something else to spoil?
Kiss and be friends, my Sebald! Is 't full morning?
Oh, don't speak then!

Sebald. Ay, thus it used to be.
Ever your house was, I remember, shut
Till mid-day; I observed that, as I strolled
On mornings through the vale here; country girls
Were noisy, washing garments in the brook,
Hinds drove the slow white oxen up the hills:
But no, your house was mute, would ope no eye.
And wisely: you were plotting one thing there,
Nature, another outside. I looked up—
Rough white wood shutters, rusty iron bars,
Silent as death, blind in a flood of light.
Oh, I remember!—and the peasants laughed
And said, "The old man sleeps with the young wife."
This house was his, this chair, this window—his.
Ottima. Ah, the clear morning! I can see St. Mark's;
That black streak is the belfry. Stop: Vicenza
Should lie . . . there 's Padua, plain enough, that blue!
Look o'er my shoulder, follow my finger!
Sebald. Morning?
It seems to me a night with a sun added.
Where 's dew, where 's freshness? That bruised plant, I bruised
In getting through the lattice yestereve,
Droops as it did. See, here 's my elbow's mark
I' the dust o' the sill.
Ottima. Oh, shut the lattice, pray!

Sebald. Let me lean out. I cannot scent blood here,
Foul as the morn may be.
There, shut the world out!
How do you feel now, Ottima? There, curse
The world and all outside! Let us throw off
This mask: how do you bear yourself? Let 's out
With all of it.

Ottima. Best never speak of it.

Sebald. Best speak again and yet again of it,
Till words cease to be more than words. "His blood,"
For instance—let those two words mean "His blood"
And nothing more. Notice, I 'll say them now,
"His blood."

Ottima. Assuredly if I repented
The deed—

Sebald. Repent? Who should repent, or why?
What puts that in your head? Did I once say
That I repented?

Ottima. No, I said the deed . . .

Sebald. "The deed" and "the event"—just now it was
"Our passion's fruit"—the devil take such cant!
Say, once and always, Luca was a wittol,
I am his cut-throat, you are . . .

Ottima. Here 's the wine;
I brought it when we left the house above,

And glasses too—wine of both sorts. Black? White then?

Sebald. But am not I his cut-throat? What are you?

Ottima. There trudges on his business from the Duomo
Benet the Capuchin, with his brown hood
And bare feet; always in one place at church,
Close under the stone wall by the south entry.
I used to take him for a brown cold piece
Of the wall's self, as out of it he rose
To let me pass—at first, I say, I used:
Now, so has that dumb figure fastened on me,
I rather should account the plastered wall
A piece of him, so chilly does it strike.
This, Sebald?

Sebald. No, the white wine—the white wine!

Well, Ottima, I promised no new year
Should rise on us the ancient shameful way;
Nor does it rise. Pour on! To your black eyes!
Do you remember last damned New Year's day?

Ottima. You brought those foreign prints. We looked at them
Over the wine and fruit. I had to scheme
To get him from the fire. Nothing but saying
His own set wants the proof-mark, roused him up
To hunt them out.

Sebald. 'Faith, he is not alive

To fondle you before my face.
Ottima. Do you
Fondle me then! Who means to take your life
For that, my Sebald?
Sebald. Hark you, Ottima!
One thing to guard against. We 'll not make much
One of the other—that is, not make more
Parade of warmth, childish officious coil,
Than yesterday: as if, sweet, I supposed
Proof upon proof were needed now, now first,
To show I love you—yes, still love you—love you
In spite of Luca and what 's come to him
—Sure sign we had him ever in our thoughts,
White sneering old reproachful face and all!
We 'll even quarrel, love, at times, as if
We still could lose each other, were not tied
By this: conceive you?
Ottima. Love!
Sebald. Not tied so sure.
Because though I was wrought upon, have struck
His insolence back into him—am I
So surely yours?—therefore forever yours?
Ottima. Love, to be wise, (one counsel pays another)
Should we have—months ago, when first we loved,
For instance that May morning we two stole
Under the green ascent of sycamores—

If we had come upon a thing like that
Suddenly . . .

Sebald. "A thing"—there again—"a thing!"

Ottima. Then, Venus' body, had we come upon
My husband Luca Gaddi's murdered corpse
Within there, at his couch-foot, covered close—
Would you have pored upon it? Why persist
In poring now upon it? For 't is here
As much as there in the deserted house:
You cannot rid your eyes of it. For me,
Now he is dead I hate him worse: I hate . . .
Dare you stay here? I would go back and hold
His two dead hands, and say, "I hate you worse,
"Luca, than . . . "

Sebald. Off, off—take your hands off mine,
'T is the hot evening—off! oh, morning is it?

Ottima. There 's one thing must be done; you know
what thing.
Come in and help to carry. We may sleep
Anywhere in the whole wide house to-night.

Sebald. What would come, think you, if we let him lie
Just as he is? Let him lie there until
The angels take him! He is turned by this
Off from his face beside, as you will see.

Ottima. This dusty pane might serve for looking glass.
Three, four—four grey hairs! Is it so you said

A plait of hair should wave across my neck?
No—this way.
Sebald. Ottima, I would give your neck,
Each splendid shoulder, both those breasts of yours,
That this were undone! Killing! Kill the world
So Luca lives again!—ay, lives to sputter
His fulsome dotage on you—yes, and feign
Surprise that I return at eve to sup,
When all the morning I was loitering here—
Bid me despatch my business and begone.
I would . . .
Ottima. See!
Sebald. No, I 'll finish. Do you think
I fear to speak the bare truth once for all?
All we have talked of, is, at bottom, fine
To suffer; there 's a recompense in guilt;
One must be venturous and fortunate:
What is one young for, else? In age we 'll sigh
O'er the wild reckless wicked days flown over;
Still, we have lived: the vice was in its place.
But to have eaten Luca's bread, have worn
His clothes, have felt his money swell my purse—
Do lovers in romances sin that way?
Why, I was starving when I used to call
And teach you music, starving while you plucked me
These flowers to smell!

Ottima. My poor lost friend !
Sebald. He gave me
Life, nothing less : what if he did reproach
My perfidy, and threaten, and do more—
Had he no right ? What was to wonder at ?
He sat by us at table quietly :
Why must you lean across till our cheeks touched ?
Could he do less than make pretence to strike ?
'T is not the crime's sake—I 'd commit ten crimes
Greater, to have this crime wiped out, undone !
And you—O how feel you ? Feel you for me ?
Ottima. Well then, I love you better now than ever,
And best (look at me while I speak to you)—
Best for the crime ; nor do I grieve, in truth,
This mask, this simulated ignorance,
This affectation of simplicity,
Falls off our crime ; this naked crime of ours
May not now be looked over : look it down !
Great ? let it be great ; but the joys it brought,
Pay they or no its price ? Come : they or it !
Speak not ! The past, would you give up the past
Such as it is, pleasure and crime together ?
Give up that noon I owned my love for you ?
The garden's silence : even the single bee
Persisting in his toil, suddenly stopped,
And where he hid you only could surmise

By some campanula chalice set a-swing.
Who stammered—"Yes, I love you?"
Sebald. And I drew
Back; put far back your face with both my hands
Lest you should grow too full of me—your face
So seemed athirst for my whole soul and body!
Ottima. And when I ventured to receive you here,
Made you steal hither in the mornings—
Sebald. When
I used to look up 'neath the shrub-house here,
Till the red fire on its glazed windows spread
To a yellow haze?
Ottima. Ah—my sign was, the sun
Inflamed the sere side of yon chestnut-tree
Nipped by the first frost.
Sebald. You would always laugh
At my wet boots: I had to stride thro' grass
Over my ankles.
Ottima. Then our crowning night!
Sebald. The July night?
Ottima. The day of it too, Sebald!
When heaven's pillars seemed o'erbowed with heat,
Its black-blue canopy suffered descend
Close on us both, to weigh down each to each,
And smother up all life except our life.
So lay we till the storm came.

Sebald. How it came!

Ottima. Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;
Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;
And ever and anon some bright white shaft
Burned thro' the pine-tree roof, here burned and there,
As if God's messenger thro' the close wood screen
Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
Feeling for guilty thee and me: then broke
The thunder like a whole sea overhead—

Sebald. Yes!

Ottima. —While I stretched myself upon you, hands
To hands, my mouth to your hot mouth, and shook
All my locks loose, and covered you with them—
You, Sebald, the same you!

Sebald. Slower, Ottima!

Ottima. And as we lay—

Sebald. Less vehemently! Love me!
Forgive me! Take not words, mere words, to heart!
Your breath is worse than wine! Breathe slow, speak slow!
Do not lean on me!

Ottima. Sebald, as we lay,
Rising and falling only with our pants,
Who said, "Let death come now! 'T is right to die!
"Right to be punished! Nought completes such bliss
"But woe!" Who said that?

Sebald. How did we ever rise? Was 't that we slept? Why did it end?

Ottima. I felt you Taper into a point the ruffled ends Of my loose locks 'twixt both your humid lips. My hair is fallen now: knot it again!

Sebald. I kiss you now, dear Ottima, now and now! This way? Will you forgive me—be once more My great queen?

Ottima. Bind it thrice about my brow; Crown me your queen, your spirit's arbitress, Magnificent in sin. Say that!

Sebald. I crown you My great white queen, my spirit's arbitress, Magnificent . . .

[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA, *singing*—

The year 's at the spring
And day 's at the morn;
Morning 's at seven;
The hill-side 's dew-pearled;
The lark 's on the wing;
The snail 's on the thorn:
God 's in his heaven—
All 's right with the world!

[PIPPA *passes.*

Sebald. God 's in his heaven! Do you hear that? Who spoke?

You, you spoke !

Ottima. Oh—that little ragged girl !
She must have rested on the step : we give them
But this one holiday the whole year round.
Did you ever see our silk-mills—their inside ?
There are ten silk-mills now belong to you.
She stoops to pick my double heartsease . . . Sh!
She does not hear : call you out louder !

Sebald. Leave me !
Go, get your clothes on—dress those shoulders !

Ottima. Sebald?

Sebald. Wipe off that paint ! I hate you.

Ottima. Miserable !

Sebald. My God, and she is emptied of it now !
Outright now !—how miraculously gone
All of the grace—had she not strange grace once ?
Why, the blank cheek hangs listless as it likes
No purpose holds the features up together,
Only the cloven brow and puckered chin
Stay in their places : and the very hair,
That seemed to have a sort of life in it.
Drops, a dead web !

Ottima. Speak to me—not of me !

Sebald. —That round great full-orbed face, where not
an angle
Broke the delicious indolence—all broken !

Ottima. To me—not of me! Ungrateful, perjured cheat!
A coward too: but ingrate 's worse than all.
Beggar—my slave—a fawning, cringing lie!
Leave me! Betray me! I can see your drift!
A lie that walks and eats and drinks!
Sebald. My God!
Those morbid olive faultless shoulder-blades—
I should have known there was no blood beneath!
Ottima. You hate me then? You hate me then?
Sebald. To think
She would succeed in her absurd attempt,
And fascinate by sinning, show herself
Superior—guilt from its excess superior
To innocence! That little peasant's voice
Has righted all again. Though I be lost,
I know which is the better, never fear,
Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,
Nature or trick! I see what I have done,
Entirely now! Oh I am proud to feel
Such torments—let the world take credit thence—
I, having done my deed, pay too its price!
I hate, hate—curse you! God 's in his heaven!
Ottima. —Me!
Me! no, no, Sebald, not yourself—kill me!
Mine is the whole crime. Do but kill me—then

Yourself—then—presently—first hear me speak!
I always meant to kill myself—wait, you!
Lean on my breast—not as a breast; don't love me
The more because you lean on me, my own
Heart's Sebald! There, there, both deaths presently!

Sebald. My brain is drowned now—quite drowned: all I feel
Is . . . is, at swift-recurring intervals,
A hurry-down within me, as of waters
Loosened to smother up some ghastly pit:
There they go—whirls from a black fiery sea!

Ottima. Not me—to him, O God, be merciful!

Talk by the way, while PIPPA *is passing from the hill-side to Orcana. Foreign* Students *of painting and sculpture, from Venice, assembled opposite the house of* JULES, *a young French statuary, at Possagno.*

1*st Student.* Attention! My own post is beneath this window, but the pomegranate clump yonder will hide three or four of you with a little squeezing, and Schramm and his pipe must lie flat in the balcony. Four, five—who 's a defaulter? We want everybody, for Jules must not be suffered to hurt his bride when the jest 's found out.

2nd Student. All here! Only our poet 's away—never having much meant to be present, moonstrike him! The airs of that fellow, that Giovacchino! He was in violent love with himself, and had a fair prospect of thriving in his suit, so unmolested was it,—when suddenly a woman falls in love with him, too; and out of pure jealousy he takes himself off to Trieste, immortal poem and all: whereto is this prophetical epitaph appended already, as Bluphocks assures me,—"*Here a mammoth-poem lies, Fouled to death by butterflies.*" His own fault, the simpleton! Instead of cramp couplets, each like a knife in your entrails, he should write, says Bluphocks, both classically and intelligibly. —*Æsculapius, an Epic. Catalogue of the drugs: Hebe's plaister—One strip Cools your lip. Phœbus' emulsion—One bottle Clears your throttle. Mercury's bolus—One box Cures . . .*

3rd Student. Subside, my fine fellow! If the marriage was over by ten o'clock, Jules will certainly be here in a minute with his bride.

2nd Student. Good!—only, so should the poet's muse have been universally acceptable, says Bluphocks, *et canibus nostris* . . . and Delia not better known to our literary dogs than the boy Giovacchino!

1st Student. To the point, now. Where 's Gottlieb, the new-comer? Oh,—listen, Gottlieb, to what has called

down this piece of friendly vengeance on Jules, of which we now assemble to witness the winding-up. We are all agreed, all in a tale, observe, when Jules shall burst out on us in a fury by and by: I am spokesman—the verses that are to undeceive Jules bear my name of Lutwyche—but each professes himself alike insulted by this strutting stone-squarer, who came alone from Paris to Munich, and thence with a crowd of us to Venice and Possagno here, but proceeds in a day or two alone again—oh, alone indubitably!—to Rome and Florence. He, forsooth, take up his portion with these dissolute, brutalized, heartless bunglers!—so he was heard to call us all: now, is Schramm brutalized, I should like to know? Am I heartless?

Gottlieb. Why, somewhat heartless; for, suppose Jules a coxcomb as much as you choose, still, for this mere coxcombry, you will have brushed off—what do folks style it?—the bloom of his life. Is it too late to alter? These love-letters now, you call his—I can't laugh at them.

4th Student. Because you never read the sham letters of our inditing which drew forth these.

Gottlieb. His discovery of the truth will be frightful.

4th Student. That 's the joke. But you should have joined us at the beginning: there 's no doubt he loves the girl—loves a model he might hire by the hour!

Gottlieb. See here! "He has been accustomed," he writes, "to have Canova's women about him, in stone, "and the world's women beside him, in flesh; these "being as much below, as those above, his soul's aspi- "ration: but now he is to have the reality." There you laugh again! I say, you wipe off the very dew of his youth.

1st Student. Schramm! (Take the pipe out of his mouth, somebody!) Will Jules lose the bloom of his youth?

Schramm. Nothing worth keeping is ever lost in this world: look at a blossom—it drops presently, having done its service and lasted its time; but fruits succeed, and where would be the blossom's place could it continue? As well affirm that your eye is no longer in your body, because its earliest favourite, whatever it may have first loved to look on, is dead and done with—as that any affection is lost to the soul when its first object, whatever happened first to satisfy it, is superseded in due course. Keep but ever looking, whether with the body's eye or the mind's, and you will soon find something to look on! Has a man done wondering at women?—there follow men, dead and alive, to wonder at. Has he done wondering at men?—there 's God to wonder at: and the faculty of wonder may be, at the same time, old and tired enough with respect to its first

object, and yet young and fresh sufficiently, so far as concerns its novel one. Thus . . .

1st Student. Put Schramm's pipe into his mouth again! There, you see! Well, this Jules . . . a wretched fribble —oh, I watched his disportings at Possagno, the other day! Canova's gallery—you know: there he marches first resolvedly past great works by the dozen without vouchsafing an eye: all at once he stops full at the *Psiche-fanciulla*—cannot pass that old acquaintance without a nod of encouragement — "In your new place, beauty? Then behave yourself as well here as at Munich —I see you!" Next he posts himself deliberately before the unfinished *Pietà* for half an hour without moving, till up he starts of a sudden, and thrusts his very nose into—I say, into—the group; by which gesture you are informed that precisely the sole point he had not fully mastered in Canova's practice was a certain method of using the drill in the articulation of the knee-joint—and that, likewise, has he mastered at length! Good-bye, therefore, to poor Canova—whose gallery no longer needs detain his successor Jules, the predestinatec novel thinker in marble!

5th Student. Tell him about the women: go on to the women!

1st Student. Why, on that matter he could never be supercilious enough. How should we be other (he said)

than the poor devils you see, with those debasing habits we cherish? He was not to wallow in that mire, at least: he would wait, and love only at the proper time, and meanwhile put up with the *Psiche-fanciulla*. Now, I happened to hear of a young Greek—real Greek girl at Malamocco; a true Islander, do you see, with Alciphron's "hair like sea-moss"—Schramm knows!—white and quiet as an apparition, and fourteen years old at farthest, —a daughter of Natalia, so she swears—that hag Natalia, who helps us to models at three *lire* an hour. We selected this girl for the heroine of our jest. So first, Jules received a scented letter—somebody had seen his Tydeus at the Academy, and my picture was nothing to it: a profound admirer bade him persevere—would make herself known to him ere long. (Paolina, my little friend of the *Fenice*, transcribes divinely.) And in due time, the mysterious correspondent gave certain hints of her peculiar charms—the pale cheeks, the black hair—whatever, in short, had struck us in our Malamocco model: we retained her name, too—Phene, which is, by interpretation, sea-eagle. Now, think of Jules finding himself distinguished from the herd of us by such a creature! In his very first answer he proposed marrying his monitress: and fancy us over these letters, two, three times a day, to receive and despatch! I concocted the main of it: relations were in the way—secrecy must be

observed—in fine, would he wed her on trust, and only speak to her when they were indissolubly united? St—st—Here they come!

6th Student. Both of them! Heaven's love, speak softly, speak within yourselves!

5th Student. Look at the bridegroom! Half his hair in storm and half in calm,—patted down over the left temple,—like a frothy cup one blows on to cool it: and the same old blouse that he murders the marble in.

2nd Student. Not a rich vest like yours, Hannibal Scratchy!—rich, that your face may the better set it off.

6th Student. And the bride! Yes, sure enough, our Phene! Should you have known her in her clothes? How magnificently pale!

Gottlieb. She does not also take it for earnest, I hope?

1st Student. Oh, Natalia's concern, that is! We settle with Natalia.

6th Student. She does not speak—has evidently let out no word. The only thing is, will she equally remember the rest of her lesson, and repeat correctly all those verses which are to break the secret to Jules?

Gottlieb. How he gazes on her! Pity—pity!

1st Student. They go in: now, silence! You three,—not nearer the window, mind, than that pomegranate: just where the little girl, who a few minutes ago passed us singing, is seated!

PART II.

NOON.

SCENE.—*Over Orcana. The house of* JULES, *who crosses its threshold with* PHENE: *she is silent, on which* JULES *begins—*

Do not die, Phene! I am yours now, you
Are mine now; let fate reach me how she likes,
If you 'll not die: so, never die! Sit here—
My work-room's single seat. I over-lean
This length of hair and lustrous front; they turn
Like an entire flower upward: eyes, lips, last
Your chin—no, last your throat turns: 't is their scent
Pulls down my face upon you. Nay, look ever
This one way till I change, grow you—I could
Change into you, beloved!
You by me,
And I by you; this is your hand in mine,
And side by side we sit: all 's true. Thank God!
I have spoken: speak you!
O my life to come!
My Tydeus must be carved that 's there in clay;

Yet how be carved, with you about the room?
Where must I place you? When I think that once
This room-full of rough block-work seemed my heaven
Without you! Shall I ever work again,
Get fairly into my old ways again,
Bid each conception stand while, trait by trait,
My hand transfers its lineaments to stone?
Will my mere fancies live near you, their truth—
The live truth, passing and repassing me,
Sitting beside me?
Now speak!
Only first,
See, all your letters! Was 't not well contrived?
Their hiding-place is Psyche's robe; she keeps
Your letters next her skin: which drops out foremost?
Ah,—this that swam down like a first moonbeam
Into my world!
Again those eyes complete
Their melancholy survey, sweet and slow,
Of all my room holds; to return and rest
On me, with pity, yet some wonder too:
As if God bade some spirit plague a world,
And this were the one moment of surprise
And sorrow while she took her station, pausing
O'er what she sees, finds good, and must destroy!
What gaze you at? Those? Books, I told you of;

Let your first word to me rejoice them, too:
This minion, a Coluthus, writ in red
Bistre and azure by Bessarion's scribe—
Read this line . . . no, shame—Homer's be the Greek
First breathed me from the lips of my Greek girl!
This Odyssey in coarse black vivid type
With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt page and page,
To mark great places with due gratitude;
"*He said, and on Antinous directed*
"*A bitter shaft*" . . . a flower blots out the rest!
Again upon your search? My statues, then!
—Ah, do not mind that—better that will look
When cast in bronze—an Almaign Kaiser, that,
Swart-green and gold, with truncheon based on hip.
This, rather, turn to! What, unrecognized?
I thought you would have seen that here you sit
As I imagined you,—Hippolyta,
Naked upon her bright Numidian horse.
Recall you this then? "Carve in bold relief"—
So you commanded—"carve, against I come,
"A Greek, in Athens, as our fashion was,
"Feasting, bay-filleted and thunder-free,
"Who rises 'neath the lifted myrtle-branch.
"'Praise those who slew Hipparchus!' cry the guests,
"'While o'er thy head the singer's myrtle waves
"'As erst above our champion: stand up, all!'"

See, I have laboured to express your thought.
Quite round, a cluster of mere hands and arms,
(Thrust in all senses, all ways, from all sides,
Only consenting at the branch's end
They strain toward) serves for frame to a sole face,
The Praiser's, in the centre: who with eyes
Sightless, so bend they back to light inside
His brain where visionary forms throng up,
Sings, minding not that palpitating arch
Of hands and arms, nor the quick drip of wine
From the drenched leaves o'erhead, nor crowns cast off,
Violet and parsley crowns to trample on—
Sings, pausing as the patron-ghosts approve,
Devoutly their unconquerable hymn.
But you must say a "well" to that—say "well!"
Because you gaze—am I fantastic, sweet?
Gaze like my very life's-stuff, marble—marbly
Even to the silence! Why, before I found
The real flesh Phene, I inured myself
To see, throughout all nature, varied stuff
For better nature's birth by means of art:
With me, each substance tended to one form
Of beauty—to the human archetype.
On every side occurred suggestive germs
Of that—the tree, the flower—or take the fruit,—
Some rosy shape, continuing the peach,

Curved beewise o'er its bough; as rosy limbs,
Depending, nestled in the leaves; and just
From a cleft rose-peach the whole Dryad sprang.
But of the stuffs one can be master of,
How I divined their capabilities!
From the soft-rinded smoothening facile chalk
That yields your outline to the air's embrace,
Half-softened by a halo's pearly gloom;
Down to the crisp imperious steel, so sure
To cut its one confided thought clean out
Of all the world. But marble!—'neath my tools
More pliable than jelly—as it were
Some clear primordial creature dug from depths
In the earth's heart, where itself breeds itself,
And whence all baser substance may be worked;
Refine it off to air, you may,—condense it
Down to the diamond;—is not metal there,
When o'er the sudden speck my chisel trips?
—Not flesh, as flake off flake I scale, approach,
Lay bare those bluish veins of blood asleep?
Lurks flame in no strange windings where, surprised
By the swift implement sent home at once,
Flushes and glowings radiate and hover
About its track?
Phene? what—why is this?
That whitening cheek, those still dilating eyes!

Ah, you will die—I knew that you would die!

PHENE *begins, on his having long remained silent.*

Now the end 's coming; to be sure, it must
Have ended sometime! Tush, why need I speak
Their foolish speech? I cannot bring to mind
One half of it, beside; and do not care
For old Natalia now, nor any of them.
Oh, you—what are you?—if I do not try
To say the words Natalia made me learn,
To please your friends,—it is to keep myself
Where your voice lifted me, by letting that
Proceed: but can it? Even you, perhaps,
Cannot take up, now you have once let fall,
The music's life, and me along with that—
No, or you would! We 'll stay, then, as we are:
Above the world.
You creature with the eyes!
If I could look for ever up to them,
As now you let me,—I believe, all sin,
All memory of wrong done, suffering borne,
Would drop down, low and lower, to the earth
Whence all that 's low comes, and there touch and stay
—Never to overtake the rest of me,
All that, unspotted, reaches up to you,
Drawn by those eyes! What rises is myself,

Not me the shame and suffering; but they sink,
Are left, I rise above them. Keep me so,
Above the world!
But you sink, for your eyes
Are altering—altered! Stay—"I love you, love"...
I could prevent it if I understood:
More of your words to me: was 't in the tone
Or the words, your power?
Or stay—I will repeat
Their speech, if that contents you! Only change
No more, and I shall find it presently
Far back here, in the brain yourself filled up.
Natalia threatened me that harm should follow
Unless I spoke their lesson to the end,
But harm to me, I thought she meant, not you.
Your friends,—Natalia said they were your friends
And meant you well,—because, I doubted it,
Observing (what was very strange to see)
On every face, so different in all else,
The same smile girls like me are used to bear,
But never men, men cannot stoop so low;
Yet your friends, speaking of you, used that smile,
That hateful smirk of boundless self-conceit
Which seems to take possession of the world
And make of God a tame confederate,
Purveyor to their appetites . . . you know!

But still Natalia said they were your friends,
And they assented though they smiled the more,
And all came round me,—that thin Englishman
With light lank hair seemed leader of the rest;
He held a paper—"What we want," said he,
Ending some explanation to his friends—
"Is something slow, involved and mystical,
"To hold Jules long in doubt, yet take his taste
"And lure him on until, at innermost
"Where he seeks sweetness' soul, he may find—this!
"—As in the apple's core, the noisome fly:
"For insects on the rind are seen at once,
"And brushed aside as soon, but this is found
"Only when on the lips or loathing tongue."
And so he read what I have got by heart:
I 'll speak it,—"Do not die, love! I am yours."
No—is not that, or like that, part of words
Yourself began by speaking? Strange to lose
What cost such pains to learn! Is this more right?

I am a painter who cannot paint;
In my life, a devil rather than saint;
In my brain, as poor a creature too:
No end to all I cannot do!
Yet do one thing at least I can—
Love a man or hate a man
Supremely: thus my lore began.
Through the Valley of Love I went,

In the lovingest spot to abide,
And just on the verge where I pitched my tent,
I found Hate dwelling beside.
(*Let the Bridegroom ask what the painter meant,*
Of his Bride, of the peerless Bride!)
And further, I traversed Hate's grove,
In the hatefullest nook to dwell;
But lo, where I flung myself prone, couched Love
Where the shadow threefold fell.
(*The meaning—those black bride's-eyes above,*
Not a painter's lip should tell!)

"And here," said he, "Jules probably will ask,
"'You have black eyes, Love,—you are, sure enough,
"'My peerless bride,—then do you tell indeed
"'What needs some explanation! What means this?'"
—And I am to go on, without a word—

So, I grew wise in Love and Hate,
From simple that I was of late.
Once, when I loved, I would enlace
Breast, eyelids, hands, feet, form and face
Of her I loved, in one embrace—
As if by mere love I could love immensely!
Once, when I hated, I would plunge
My sword, and wipe with the first lunge
My foe's whole life out like a sponge—
As if by mere hate I could hate intensely!
But now I am wiser, know better the fashion
How passion seeks aid from its opposite passion:

And if I see cause to love more, hate more
Than ever man loved, ever hated before—
And seek in the Valley of Love,
The nest, or the nook in Hate's Grove,
Where my soul may surely reach
The essence, nought less, of each,
The Hate of all Hates, the Love
Of all Loves, in the Valley or Grove,—
I find them the very warders
Each of the other's borders.
When I love most, Love is disguised
In Hate; and when Hate is surprised
In Love, then I hate most: ask
How Love smiles through Hate's iron casque,
Hate grins through Love's rose-braided mask,—
And how, having hated thee,
I sought long and painfully
To reach thy heart, nor prick
The skin but pierce to the quick—
Ask this, my Jules, and be answered straight
By thy bride—how the painter Lutwyche can hate!

JULES *interposes.*

Lutwyche! Who else? But all of them, no doubt,
Hated me: they at Venice—presently
Their turn, however! You I shall not meet:
If I dreamed, saying this would wake me.
Keep
What 's here, the gold—we cannot meet again,

Consider! and the money was but meant
For two years' travel, which is over now,
All chance or hope or care or need of it.
This—and what comes from selling these, my casts
And books and medals, except . . . let them go
Together, so the produce keeps you safe
Out of Natalia's clutches! If by chance
(For all 's chance here) I should survive the gang
At Venice, root out all fifteen of them,
We might meet somewhere, since the world is wide.

[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA, *singing*—

Give her but a least excuse to love me!
When—where—
How—can this arm establish her above me,
If fortune fixed her as my lady there,
There already, to eternally reprove me?
(*"Hist!"—said Kate the Queen;*
But "Oh!"—cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
"'T is only a page that carols unseen,
"Crumbling your hounds their messes!")

Is she wronged?—To the rescue of her honour,
My heart!
Is she poor?—What costs it to be styled a donor?
Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part.
But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her!
(*"Nay, list!"—bade Kate the Queen;*
And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,

"'*T is only a page that carols unseen,*
"*Fitting your hawks their jesses!*")

[PIPPA *passes.*

JULES *resumes.*

What name was that the little girl sang forth?
Kate? The Cornaro, doubtless, who renounced
The crown of Cyprus to be lady here
At Asolo, where still her memory stays,
And peasants sing how once a certain page
Pined for the grace of her so far above
His power of doing good to, "Kate the Queen—
"She never could be wronged, be poor," he sighed,
"Need him to help her!"
Yes, a bitter thing
To see our lady above all need of us;
Yet so we look ere we will love; not I,
But the world looks so. If whoever loves
Must be, in some sort, god or worshipper,
The blessing or the blest one, queen or page,
Why should we always choose the page's part?
Here is a woman with utter need of me,—
I find myself queen here, it seems!
How strange!
Look at the woman here with the new soul,
Like my own Psyche,—fresh upon her lips
Alit, the visionary butterfly.

Waiting my word to enter and make bright,
Or flutter off and leave all blank as first.
This body had no soul before, but slept
Or stirred, was beauteous or ungainly, free
From taint or foul with stain, as outward things
Fastened their image on its passiveness:
Now, it will wake, feel, live—or die again!
Shall to produce form out of unshaped stuff
Be Art—and further, to evoke a soul
From form be nothing? This new soul is mine!

Now, to kill Lutwyche, what would that do?—save
A wretched dauber, men will hoot to death
Without me, from their hooting. Oh, to hear
God's voice plain as I heard it first, before
They broke in with their laughter! I heard them
Henceforth, not God.
To Ancona—Greece—some isle!
I wanted silence only; there is clay
Everywhere. One may do whate'er one likes
In Art: the only thing is, to make sure
That one does like it—which takes pains to know.
Scatter all this, my Phene—this mad dream!
Who, what is Lutwyche, what Natalia's friends,
What the whole world except our love—my own,
Own Phene? But I told you, did I not,

Ere night we travel for your land—some isle
With the sea's silence on it? Stand aside—
I do but break these paltry models up
To begin Art afresh. Meet Lutwyche, I—
And save him from my statue meeting him?
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!
Like a god going through his world, there stands
One mountain for a moment in the dusk,
Whole brotherhoods of cedars on its brow:
And you are ever by me while I gaze
—Are in my arms as now—as now—as now!
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!
Some unsuspected isle in far-off seas!

Talk by the way, while PIPPA *is passing from Orcana to the Turret. Two or three of the Austrian Police loitering with* BLUPHOCKS, *an English vagabond, just in view of the Turret.*

*Bluphocks.** So, that is your Pippa, the little girl who passed us singing? Well, your Bishop's Intendant's money shall be honestly earned:—now, don't make me that sour face because I bring the Bishop's name into the business; we know he can have nothing to do with

* "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

such horrors: we know that he is a saint and all that a bishop should be, who is a great man beside. *Oh were but every worm a maggot, Every fly a grig, Every bough a Christmas faggot, Every tune a jig!* In fact, I have abjured all religions; but the last I inclined to, was the Armenian: for I have travelled, do you see, and at Koenigsberg, Prussia Improper (so styled because there 's a sort of bleak hungry sun there), you might remark over a venerable house-porch, a certain Chaldee inscription; and brief as it is, a mere glance at it used absolutely to change the mood of every bearded passenger. In they turned, one and all; the young and lightsome, with no irreverent pause, the aged and decrepit, with a sensible alacrity: 't was the Grand Rabbi's abode, in short. Struck with curiosity, I lost no time in learning Syriac —(these are vowels, you dogs,—follow my stick's end in the mud—*Celarent, Darii, Ferio!*) and one morning presented myself, spelling-book in hand, a, b, c,—I picked it out letter by letter, and what was the purport of this miraculous posy? Some cherished legend of the past, you 'll say—"*How Moses hocus-pocussed Egypt's land with fly and locust,*"—or, "*How to Jonah sounded harshish, Get thee up and go to Tarshish,*"—or, "*How the angel meeting Balaam, Straight his ass returned a salaam,*" In no wise! "*Shackabrack—Boach—somebody or other —Isaach, Re-cei-ver, Pur-cha-ser and Ex-chan-ger of—*

Stolen Goods!" So, talk to me of the religion of a bishop! I have renounced all bishops save Bishop Beveridge—mean to live so—and die—*As some Greek dog-sage, dead and merry, Hellward bound in Charon's wherry, With food for both worlds, under and upper, Lupine-seed and Hecate's supper, And never an obolus . . .* (Though thanks to you, or this Intendant through you, or this Bishop through his Intendant—I possess a burning pocketful of *zwanzigers*) . . . *To pay the Stygian Ferry!*

1st Policeman. There is the girl, then; go and deserve them the moment you have pointed out to us Signor Luigi and his mother. [*To the rest.*] I have been noticing a house yonder, this long while: not a shutter unclosed since morning!

2nd Policeman. Old Luca Gaddi's, that owns the silk-mills here: he dozes by the hour, wakes up, sighs deeply, says he should like to be Prince Metternich, and then dozes again, after having bidden young Sebald, the foreigner, set his wife to playing draughts. Never molest such a household, they mean well.

Bluphocks. Only, cannot you tell me something of this little Pippa, I must have to do with? One could make something of that name. Pippa—that is, short for Felippa—rhyming to *Panurge consults Hertrippa—Believest thou, King Agrippa?* Something might be done with that name.

2nd Policeman. Put into rhyme that your head and a ripe musk-melon would not be dear at half a *zwanziger!* Leave this fooling, and look out; the afternoon 's over or nearly so.

3rd Policeman. Where in this passport of Signor Luigi does our Principal instruct you to watch him so narrowly? There? What 's there beside a simple signature? (That English fool 's busy watching.)

2nd Policeman. Flourish all round—"Put all possible obstacles in his way;" oblong dot at the end—"Detain him till further advices reach you;" scratch at bottom—"Send him back on pretence of some informality in the above;" ink-spirt on right-hand side (which is the case here)—"Arrest him at once." Why and wherefore, I don't concern myself, but my instructions amount to this: if Signor Luigi leaves home to-night for Vienna —well and good, the passport deposed with us for our *visa* is really for his own use, they have misinformed the Office, and he means well; but let him stay over to-night—there has been the pretence we suspect, the accounts of his corresponding and holding intelligence with the Carbonari are correct, we arrest him at once, to-morrow comes Venice, and presently Spielberg. Bluphocks makes the signal, sure enough! That is he, entering the turret with his mother, no doubt.

PART III.

EVENING.

SCENE.—*Inside the Turret on the Hill above Asolo.*
LUIGI *and his* Mother *entering.*

Mother. If there blew wind, you 'd hear a long sigh, easing
The utmost heaviness of music's heart.
Luigi. Here in the archway?
Mother. Oh no, no—in farther,
Where the echo is made, on the ridge.
Luigi. Here surely, then.
How plain the tap of my heel as I leaped up!
Hark—"Lucius Junius!" The very ghost of a voice
Whose body is caught and kept by . . . what are those?
Mere withered wallflowers, waving overhead?
They seem an elvish group with thin bleached hair
That lean out of their topmost fortress—look
And listen, mountain men, to what we say,
Hand under chin of each grave earthy face.
Up and show faces all of you!—"All of you!"

That 's the king dwarf with the scarlet comb; old Franz,
Come down and meet your fate? Hark—"Meet your
fate!"

Mother. Let him not meet it, my Luigi—do not
Go to his City! Putting crime aside,
Half of these ills of Italy are feigned:
Your Pellicos and writers for effect,
Write for effect.

Luigi. Hush! Say A. writes, and B.

Mother. These A.s and B.s write for effect, I say.
Then, evil is in its nature loud, while good
Is silent; you hear each petty injury,
None of his virtues; he is old beside,
Quiet and kind, and densely stupid. Why
Do A. and B. not kill him themselves?

Luigi. They teach
Others to kill him—me—and, if I fail,
Others to succeed; now, if A. tried and failed,
I could not teach that: mine 's the lesser task.
Mother, they visit night by night . . .

Mother. —You, Luigi?
Ah, will you let me tell you what you are?

Luigi. Why not? Oh, the one thing you fear to hint,
You may assure yourself I say and say
Ever to myself! At times—nay, even as now
We sit—I think my mind is touched, suspect

All is not sound: but is not knowing that,
What constitutes one sane or otherwise?
I know I am thus—so, all is right again.
I laugh at myself as through the town I walk,
And see men merry as if no Italy
Were suffering; then I ponder—"I am rich,
"Young, healthy; why should this fact trouble me,
"More than it troubles these?" But it does trouble.
No, trouble 's a bad word: for as I walk
There 's springing and melody and giddiness,
And old quaint turns and passages of my youth,
Dreams long forgotten, little in themselves,
Return to me—whatever may amuse me:
And earth seems in a truce with me, and heaven
Accords with me, all things suspend their strife,
The very cicala laughs "There goes he, and there!
"Feast him, the time is short; he is on his way
"For the world's sake: feast him this once, our friend!"
And in return for all this, I can trip
Cheerfully up the scaffold-steps. I go
This evening, mother!

Mother. But mistrust yourself—
Mistrust the judgment you pronounce on him!

Luigi. Oh, there I feel—am sure that I am right!

Mother. Mistrust your judgment then, of the mere means

To this wild enterprise. Say, you are right,—
How should one in your state e'er bring to pass
What would require a cool head, a cold heart,
And a calm hand? You never will escape.

Luigi. Escape? To even wish that, would spoil all.
The dying is best part of it. Too much
Have I enjoyed these fifteen years of mine,
To leave myself excuse for longer life:
Was not life pressed down, running o'er with joy,
That I might finish with it ere my fellows
Who, sparelier feasted, make a longer stay?
I was put at the board-head, helped to all
At first; I rise up happy and content.
God must be glad one loves his world so much.
I can give news of earth to all the dead
Who ask me:—last year's sunsets, and great stars
Which had a right to come first and see ebb
The crimson wave that drifts the sun away—
Those crescent moons with notched and burning rims
That strengthened into sharp fire, and there stood,
Impatient of the azure—and that day
In March, a double rainbow stopped the storm—
May 's warm slow yellow moonlit summer nights—
Gone are they, but I have them in my soul!

Mother. (He will not go!)

Luigi. You smile at me? 'T is true,—

Voluptuousness, grotesqueness, ghastliness,
Environ my devotedness as quaintly
As round about some antique altar wreathe
The rose festoons, goats' horns, and oxen's skulls.
Mother. See now: you reach the city, you must cross
His threshold—how?
Luigi. Oh, that 's if we conspired!
Then would come pains in plenty, as you guess—
But guess not how the qualities most fit
For such an office, qualities I have,
Would little stead me, otherwise employed,
Yet prove of rarest merit only here.
Every one knows for what his excellence
Will serve, but no one ever will consider
For what his worst defect might serve: and yet
Have you not seen me range our coppice yonder
In search of a distorted ash?—I find
The wry spoilt branch a natural perfect bow.
Fancy the thrice-sage, thrice-precautioned man
Arriving at the palace on my errand!
No, no! I have a handsome dress packed up—
White satin here, to set off my black hair;
In I shall march—for you may watch your life out
Behind thick walls, make friends there to betray you;
More than one man spoils everything. March straight—
Only, no clumsy knife to fumble for.

Take the great gate, and walk (not saunter) on
Thro' guards and guards——I have rehearsed it all
Inside the turret here a hundred times.
Don't ask the way of whom you meet, observe!
But where they cluster thickliest is the door
Of doors; they 'll let you pass—they 'll never blab
Each to the other, he knows not the favourite,
Whence he is bound and what 's his business now.
Walk in—straight up to him; you have no knife:
Be prompt, how should he scream? Then, out with you!
Italy, Italy, my Italy!
You 're free, you 're free! Oh mother, I could dream
They got about me—Andrea from his exile,
Pier from his dungeon, Gualtier from his grave!

Mother. Well, you shall go. Yet seems this patriotism
The easiest virtue for a selfish man
To acquire: he loves himself—and next, the world—
If he must love beyond,—but nought between:
As a short-sighted man sees nought midway
His body and the sun above. But you
Are my adored Luigi, ever obedient
To my least wish, and running o'er with love:
I could not call you cruel or unkind.
Once more, your ground for killing him!—then go!

Luigi. Now do you try me, or make sport of me?
How first the Austrians got these provinces . . .

(If that is all, I 'll satisfy you soon)
—Never by conquest but by cunning, for
That treaty whereby . . .
Mother. Well?
Luigi. (Sure, he 's arrived,
The tell-tale cuckoo : spring 's his confidant,
And he lets out her April purposes!)
Or . . . better go at once to modern time,
He has . . . they have . . . in fact, I understand
But can't restate the matter; that 's my boast:
Others could reason it out to you, and prove
Things they have made me feel.
Mother. Why go to-night?
Morn 's for adventure. Jupiter is now
A morning-star. I cannot hear you, Luigi!
Luigi. "I am the bright and morning-star," saith
God—
And, "to such an one I give the morning-star.
The gift of the morning-star! Have I God's gift
Of the morning-star?
Mother. Chiara will love to see
That Jupiter an evening-star next June.
Luigi. True, mother. Well for those who live through
June!
Great noontides, thunder-storms, all glaring pomps
That triumph at the heels of June the god

Leading his revel through our leafy world.
Yes, Chiara will be here.
Mother. In June: remember,
Yourself appointed that month for her coming.
Luigi. Was that low noise the echo?
Mother. The night-wind.
She must be grown—with her blue eyes upturned
As if life were one long and sweet surprise:
In June she comes.
Luigi. We were to see together
The Titian at Treviso. There, again!

[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA, *singing*—

A king lived long ago,
In the morning of the world,
When earth was nigher heaven than now:
And the king's locks curled,
Disparting o'er a forehead full
As the milk-white space 'twixt horn and horn
Of some sacrificial bull—
Only calm as a babe new-born:
For he was got to a sleepy mood,
So safe from all decrepitude,
Age with its bane, so sure gone by,
(*The gods so loved him while he dreamed*)
That, having lived thus long, there seemed
No need the king should ever die.

Luigi. No need that sort of king should ever die!

Among the rocks his city was:
Before his palace, in the sun,
He sat to see his people pass,
And judge them every one
From its threshold of smooth stone.
They haled him many a valley-thief
Caught in the sheep-pens, robber-chief
Swarthy and shameless, beggar-cheat,
Spy-prowler, or rough pirate found
On the sea-sand left aground;
And sometimes clung about his feet,
With bleeding lip and burning cheek,
A woman, bitterest wrong to speak
Of one with sullen thickset brows:
And sometimes from the prison-house
The angry priests a pale wretch brought,
Who through some chink had pushed and pressed
On knees and elbows, belly and breast,
Worm-like into the temple,—caught
He was by the very god,
Who ever in the darkness strode
Backward and forward, keeping watch
O'er his brazen bowls, such rogues to catch!
These, all and every one,
The king judged, sitting in the sun.

Luigi. That king should still judge sitting in the sun!

His councillors, on left and right,
Looked anxious up,—but no surprise
Disturbed the king's old smiling eyes

Where the very blue had turned to white.
'T is said, a Python scared one day
The breathless city, till he came,
With forky tongue and eyes on flame,
Where the old king sat to judge alway;
But when he saw the sweepy hair
Girt with a crown of berries rare
Which the god will hardly give to wear
To the maiden who singeth, dancing bare
In the altar-smoke by the pine-torch lights,
At his wondrous forest rites,—
Seeing this, he did not dare
Approach that threshold in the sun,
Assault the old king smiling there.
Such grace had kings when the world begun!

[PIPPA *passes.*

Luigi. And such grace have they, now that the world ends!
The Python at the city, on the throne,
And brave men, God would crown for slaying him,
Lurk in bye-corners lest they fall his prey.
Are crowns yet to be won in this late time,
Which weakness makes me hesitate to reach?
'T is God's voice calls: how could I stay? Farewell!

Talk by the way, while PIPPA *is passing from the Turret to the Bishop's Brother's House, close to the Duomo S. Maria. Poor* Girls *sitting on the steps.*

1*st Girl.* There goes a swallow to Venice—the stout
seafarer!
Seeing those birds fly, makes one wish for wings.
Let us all wish; you wish first!
2*nd Girl.* I? This sunset
To finish.
3*rd Girl.* That old—somebody I know,
Greyer and older than my grandfather,
To give me the same treat he gave last week—
Feeding me on his knee with fig-peckers,
Lampreys and red Breganze-wine, and mumbling
The while some folly about how well I fare,
Let sit and eat my supper quietly:
Since had he not himself been late this morning
Detained at—never mind where,—had he not . . .
"Eh, baggage, had I not!"—
2*nd Girl.* How she can lie!
3*rd Girl.* Look there—by the nails!
2*nd Girl.* What makes your fingers red?
3*rd Girl.* Dipping them into wine to write bad words
with
On the bright table: how he laughed!

1st Girl. My turn.
Spring 's come and summer 's coming. I would wear
A long loose gown, down to the feet and hands,
With plaits here, close about the throat, all day;
And all night lie, the cool long nights, in bed;
And have new milk to drink, apples to eat,
Deuzans and junetings, leather-coats . . ah, I should say,
This is away in the fields—miles!
3rd Girl. Say at once
You 'd be at home: she 'd always be at home!
Now comes the story of the farm among
The cherry orchards, and how April snowed
White blossoms on her as she ran. Why, fool,
They 've rubbed the chalk-mark out, how tall you were
Twisted your starling's neck, broken his cage,
Made a dung-hill of your garden!
1st Girl. They, destroy
My garden since I left them? well—perhaps!
I would have done so: so I hope they have!
A fig-tree curled out of our cottage wall;
They called it mine, I have forgotten why,
It must have been there long ere I was born:
Cric—cric—I think I hear the wasps o'erhead
Pricking the papers strung to flutter there
And keep off birds in fruit-time—coarse long papers,
And the wasps eat them, prick them through and through.

3rd Girl. How her mouth twitches! Where was I?—
before
She broke in with her wishes and long gowns
And wasps—would I be such a fool!—Oh, here!
This is my way: I answer every one
Who asks me why I make so much of him—
(If you say, "you love him"—straight "he 'll not be
gulled!")
"He that seduced me when I was a girl
"Thus high—had eyes like yours, or hair like yours,
"Brown, red, white,"—as the case may be: that pleases!
See how that beetle burnishes in the path!
There sparkles he along the dust: and, there—
Your journey to that maize-tuft spoiled at least!
1st Girl. When I was young, they said if you killed one
Of those sunshiny beetles, that his friend
Up there, would shine no more that day nor next.
2nd Girl. When you were young? Nor are you young,
that 's true.
How your plump arms, that were, have dropped away!
Why, I can span them. Cecco beats you still?
No matter, so you keep your curious hair.
I wish they 'd find a way to dye our hair
Your colour—any lighter tint, indeed,
Than black: the men say they are sick of black,
Black eyes, black hair!

4th Girl. Sick of yours, like enough.
Do you pretend you ever tasted lampreys
And ortolans? Giovita, of the palace,
Engaged (but there 's no trusting him) to slice me
Polenta with a knife that had cut up
An ortolan.

2nd Girl. Why, there! Is not that Pippa
We are to talk to, under the window,—quick,—
Where the lights are?

1st Girl. That she? No, or she would sing.
For the Intendant said . . .

3rd Girl. Oh, you sing first!
Then, if she listens and comes close . . I 'll tell you,—
Sing that song the young English noble made,
Who took you for the purest of the pure,
And meant to leave the world for you—what fun!

2nd Girl [*sings*].

You 'll love me yet!—and I can tarry
Your love's protracted growing:
June reared that bunch of flowers you carry,
From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartful now: some seed
At least is sure to strike,
And yield—what you 'll not pluck indeed,
Not love, but, may be, like.

You 'll look at least on love's remains,
A grave's one violet:
Your look?—that pays a thousand pains.
What 's death? You 'll love me yet!

3rd Girl [*to* PIPPA *who approaches*]. Oh, you may come closer—we shall not eat you! Why, you seem the very person that the great rich handsome Englishman has fallen so violently in love with. I 'll tell you all about it.

PART IV.

NIGHT.

SCENE.—*Inside the Palace by the Duomo.* MONSIGNOR, *dismissing his* Attendants.

Monsignor. Thanks, friends, many thanks! I chiefly desire life now, that I may recompense every one of you. Most I know something of already. What, a repast prepared? *Benedicto benedicatur* . . . ugh, ugh! Where was I? Oh, as you were remarking, Ugo, the weather is mild, very unlike winter-weather: but I am a Sicilian, you know, and shiver in your Julys here. To be sure, when 't was full summer at Messina, as we priests used to cross in procession the great square on Assumption Day, you might see our thickest yellow tapers twist suddenly in two, each like a falling star, or sink down on themselves in a gore of wax. But go, my friends, but go! [*To the* Intendant.] Not you, Ugo! [*The others leave the apartment.*] I have long wanted to converse with you, Ugo.

Intendant. Uguccio—

Monsignor. . . 'guccio Stefani, man! of Ascoli, Fermo and Fossombruno;—what I do need instructing about, are these accounts of your administration of my poor brother's affairs. Ugh! I shall never get through a third part of your accounts: take some of these dainties before we attempt it, however. Are you bashful to that degree? For me, a crust and water suffice.

Intendant. Do you choose this especial night to question me?

Monsignor. This night, Ugo. You have managed my late brother's affairs since the death of our elder brother: fourteen years and a month, all but three days. On the Third of December, I find him . . .

Intendant. If you have so intimate an acquaintance with your brother's affairs, you will be tender of turning so far back: they will hardly bear looking into, so far back.

Monsignor. Ay, ay, ugh, ugh,—nothing but disappointments here below! I remark a considerable payment made to yourself on this Third of December. Talk of disappointments! There was a young fellow here, Jules, a foreign sculptor I did my utmost to advance, that the Church might be a gainer by us both: he was going on hopefully enough, and of a sudden he notifies to me some marvellous change that has happened in his notions of Art. Here 's his letter,—"He never had a clearly

conceived Ideal within his brain till to-day. Yet since his hand could manage a chisel, he has practised expressing other men's Ideals; and, in the very perfection he has attained to, he foresees an ultimate failure: his unconscious hand will pursue its prescribed course of old years, and will reproduce with a fatal expertness the ancient types, let the novel one appear never so palpably to his spirit. There is but one method of escape: confiding the virgin type to as chaste a hand, he will turn painter instead of sculptor, and paint, not carve, its characteristics,"—strike out, I dare say, a school like Correggio: how think you, Ugo?

Intendant. Is Correggio a painter?

Monsignor. Foolish Jules! and yet, after all, why foolish? He may—probably will—fail egregiously; but if there should arise a new painter, will it not be in some such way, by a poet now, or a musician (spirits who have conceived and perfected an Ideal through some other channel), transferring it to this, and escaping our conventional roads by pure ignorance of them; eh, Ugo? If you have no appetite, talk at least, Ugo!

Intendant. Sir, I can submit no longer to this course of yours. First, you select the group of which I formed one,—next you thin it gradually,—always retaining me with your smile,—and so do you proceed till you have

fairly got me alone with you between four stone walls. And now then? Let this farce, this chatter end now: what is it you want with me?

Monsignor. Ugo!

Intendant. From the instant you arrived, I felt your smile on me as you questioned me about this and the other article in those papers—why your brother should have given me this villa, that *podere*,—and your nod at the end meant,—what?

Monsignor. Possibly that I wished for no loud talk here. If once you set me coughing, Ugo!—

Intendant. I have your brother's hand and seal to all I possess: now ask me what for! what service I did him—ask me!

Monsignor. I would better not: I should rip up old disgraces, let out my poor brother's weaknesses. By the way, Maffeo of Forli (which, I forgot to observe, is your true name), was the interdict ever taken off you, for robbing that church at Cesena?

Intendant. No, nor needs be: for when I murdered your brother's friend, Pasquale, for him . . .

Monsignor. Ah, he employed you in that business, did he? Well, I must let you keep, as you say, this villa and that *podere*, for fear the world should find out my relations were of so indifferent a stamp? Maffeo, my family is the oldest in Messina, and century after century

have my progenitors gone on polluting themselves with every wickedness under heaven: my own father . . . rest his soul!—I have, I know, a chapel to support that it may rest: my dear two dead brothers were,—what you know tolerably well; I, the youngest, might have rivalled them in vice, if not in wealth: but from my boyhood I came out from among them, and so am not partaker of their plagues. My glory springs from another source; or if from this, by contrast only,—for I, the bishop, am the brother of your employers, Ugo. I hope to repair some of their wrong, however; so far as my brothers' ill-gotten treasure reverts to me, I can stop the consequences of his crime: and not one *soldo* shall escape me. Maffeo, the sword we quiet men spurn away, you shrewd knaves pick up and commit murders with; what opportunities the virtuous forego, the villanous seize. Because, to pleasure myself apart from other considerations, my food would be millet-cake, my dress sackcloth, and my couch straw,—am I therefore to let you, the offscouring of the earth, seduce the poor and ignorant by appropriating a pomp these will be sure to think lessens the abominations so unaccountably and exclusively associated with it? Must I let villas and *poderi* go to you, a murderer and thief, that you may beget by means of them other murderers and thieves? No—if my cough would but allow me to speak!

Intendant. What am I to expect? You are going to punish me?

Monsignor. —Must punish you, Maffeo. I cannot afford to cast away a chance. I have whole centuries of sin to redeem, and only a month or two of life to do it in. How should I dare to say . . .

Intendant. "Forgive us our trespasses"?

Monsignor. My friend, it is because I avow myself a very worm, sinful beyond measure, that I reject a line of conduct you would applaud perhaps. Shall I proceed, as it were, a-pardoning?—I?—who have no symptom of reason to assume that aught less than my strenuousest efforts will keep myself out of mortal sin, much less keep others out. No: I do trespass, but will not double that by allowing you to trespass.

Intendant. And suppose the villas are not your brother's to give, nor yours to take? Oh, you are hasty enough just now!

Monsignor. 1, 2—N° 3!—ay, can you read the substance of a letter, N° 3, I have received from Rome? It is precisely on the ground there mentioned, of the suspicion I have that a certain child of my late elder brother, who would have succeeded to his estates, was murdered in infancy by you, Maffeo, at the instigation of my late younger brother—that the Pontiff enjoins on me not merely the bringing that Maffeo to condign punishment,

but the taking all pains, as guardian of the infant's heritage for the Church, to recover it parcel by parcel, howsoever, whensoever, and wheresoever. While you are now gnawing those fingers, the police are engaged in sealing up your papers, Maffeo, and the mere raising my voice brings my people from the next room to dispose of yourself. But I want you to confess quietly, and save me raising my voice. Why, man, do I not know the old story? The heir between the succeeding heir, and this heir's ruffianly instrument, and their complot's effect, and the life of fear and bribes and ominous smiling silence? Did you throttle or stab my brother's infant? Come now!

Intendant. So old a story, and tell it no better? When did such an instrument ever produce such an effect? Either the child smiles in his face; or, most likely, he is not fool enough to put himself in the employer's power so thoroughly: the child is always ready to produce—as you say—howsoever, wheresoever, and whensoever.

Monsignor. Liar!

Intendant. Strike me? Ah, so might a father chastise! I shall sleep soundly to-night at least, though the gallows await me to-morrow; for what a life did I lead! Carlo of Cesena reminds me of his connivance, every time I pay his annuity; which happens commonly thrice a year. If I remonstrate, he will confess all to the good bishop—you!

Monsignor. I see through the trick, caitiff! I would you spoke truth for once. All shall be sifted, however—seven times sifted.

Intendant. And how my absurd riches encumbered me! I dared not lay claim to above half my possessions. Let me but once unbosom myself, glorify Heaven, and die!

Sir, you are no brutal dastardly idiot like your brother I frightened to death: let us understand one another. Sir, I will make away with her for you—the girl—here close at hand; not the stupid obvious kind of killing; do not speak—know nothing of her nor of me! I see her every day—saw her this morning: of course there is to be no killing; but at Rome the courtesans perish off every three years, and I can entice her thither—have indeed begun operations already. There 's a certain lusty blue-eyed florid-complexioned English knave, I and the Police employ occasionally. You assent, I perceive—no, that 's not it—assent I do not say—but you will let me convert my present havings and holdings into cash, and give me time to cross the Alps? 'T is but a little black-eyed pretty singing Felippa, gay silk-winding girl. I have kept her out of harm's way up to this present; for I always intended to make your life a plague to you with her. 'T is as well settled once and for ever. Some women I have procured will pass Bluphocks, my

handsome scoundrel, off for somebody; and once Pippa entangled!—you conceive? Through her singing? Is it a bargain?

[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA, *singing*—

Overhead the tree-tops meet,
Flowers and grass spring 'neath one's feet;
There was nought above me, nought below,
My childhood had not learned to know:
For, what are the voices of birds
—Ay, and of beasts,—but words, our words,
Only so much more sweet?
The knowledge of that with my life begun.
But I had so near made out the sun,
And counted your stars, the seven and one,
Like the fingers of my hand:
Nay, I could all but understand
Wherefore through heaven the white moon ranges;
And just when out of her soft fifty changes
No unfamiliar face might overlook me—
Suddenly God took me.

[PIPPA *passes.*

Monsignor [*springing up*]. My people—one and all—all—within there! Gag this villain—tie him hand and foot! He dares . . . I know not half he dares—but remove him—quick! *Miserere mei, Domine!* Quick, I say!

SCENE.—PIPPA'S *chamber again. She enters it.*

The bee with his comb,
The mouse at her dray,
The grub in his tomb,
Wile winter away;
But the fire-fly and hedge-shrew and lob-worm, I pray,
How fare they?
Ha, ha, thanks for your counsel, my Zanze!
"Feast upon lampreys, quaff Breganze"—
The summer of life so easy to spend,
And care for to-morrow so soon put away!
But winter hastens at summer's end,
And fire-fly, hedge-shrew, lob-worm, pray,
How fare they?
No bidding me then to . . . what did Zanze say?
"Pare your nails pearlwise, get your small feet shoes
"More like" . . (what said she?)—"and less like canoes!"
How pert that girl was!—would I be those pert
Impudent staring women! It had done me,
However, surely no such mighty hurt
To learn his name who passed that jest upon me:
No foreigner, that I can recollect,
Came, as she says, a month since, to inspect
Our silk-mills—none with blue eyes and thick rings
Of raw-silk-coloured hair, at all events.

Well, if old Luca keep his good intents,
We shall do better, see what next year brings.
I may buy shoes, my Zanze, not appear
More destitute than you perhaps next year!
Bluph . . . something! I had caught the uncouth
name
But for Monsignor's people's sudden clatter
Above us—bound to spoil such idle chatter
As ours: it were indeed a serious matter
If silly talk like ours should put to shame
The pious man, the man devoid of blame,
The . . . ah but—ah but, all the same,
No mere mortal has a right
To carry that exalted air;
Best people are not angels quite:
While—not the worst of people's doings scare
The devil; so there 's that proud look to spare!
Which is mere counsel to myself, mind! for
I have just been the holy Monsignor:
And I was you too, Luigi's gentle mother,
And you too, Luigi!—how that Luigi started
Out of the turret—doubtlessly departed
On some good errand or another,
For he passed just now in a traveller's trim,
And the sullen company that prowled
About his path, I noticed, scowled

As if they had lost a prey in him.
And I was Jules the sculptor's bride,
And I was Ottima beside,
And now what am I?—tired of fooling.
Day for folly, night for schooling!
New year's day is over and spent,
Ill or well, I must be content.
Even my lily 's asleep, I vow:
Wake up—here 's a friend I 've plucked you:
Call this flower a heart's-ease now!
Something rare, let me instruct you,
Is this, with petals triply swollen,
Three times spotted, thrice the pollen;
While the leaves and parts that witness
Old proportions and their fitness,
Here remain unchanged, unmoved now;
Call this pampered thing improved now!
Suppose there 's a king of the flowers
And a girl-show held in his bowers—
"Look ye, buds, this growth of ours,"
Says he, "Zanze from the Brenta,
"I have made her gorge polenta
"Till both cheeks are near as bouncing
"As her . . . name there 's no pronouncing!
"See this heightened colour too,
"For she swilled Breganze wine

"Till her nose turned deep carmine;
"'T was but white when wild she grew.
"And only by this Zanze's eyes
"Of which we could not change the size,
"The magnitude of all achieved
"Otherwise, may be perceived."

Oh what a drear dark close to my poor day!
How could that red sun drop in that black cloud?
Ah Pippa, morning's rule is moved away,
Dispensed with, never more to be allowed!
Day's turn is over, now arrives the night's.
Oh lark, be day's apostle
To mavis, merle and throstle,
Bid them their betters jostle
From day and its delights!
But at night, brother howlet, over the woods,
Toll the world to thy chantry;
Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods
Full complines with gallantry:
Then, owls and bats,
Cowls and twats,
Monks and nuns, in a cloister's moods,
Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry!

[*After she has begun to undress herself.*

Now, one thing I should like to really know:

How near I ever might approach all these
I only fancied being, this long day:
—Approach, I mean, so as to touch them, so
As to . . . in some way . . . move them—if you
please,
Do good or evil to them some slight way.
For instance, if I wind
Silk to-morrow, my silk may bind
[*Sitting on the bedside.*
And border Ottima's cloak's hem.
Ah me, and my important part with them,
This morning's hymn half promised when I rose!
True in some sense or other, I suppose.
[*As she lies down.*
God bless me! I can pray no more to-night.
No doubt, some way or other, hymns say right.

All service ranks the same with God—
With God, whose puppets, best and worst,
Are we: there is no last nor first.

[*She sleeps.*

KING VICTOR & KING CHARLES;

A TRAGEDY.

NOTE.

So far as I know, this Tragedy is the first artistic consequence of what Voltaire termed "a terrible event without consequences;" and although it professes to be historical, I have taken more pains to arrive at the history than most readers would thank me for particularizing: since acquainted, as I will hope them to be, with the chief circumstances of Victor's remarkable European career—nor quite ignorant of the sad and surprising facts I am about to reproduce (a tolerable account of which is to be found, for instance, in Abbé Roman's *Récit*, or even the fifth of Lord Orrery's Letters from Italy)—I cannot expect them to be versed, nor desirous of becoming so, in all the detail of the memoirs, correspondence, and relations of the time. From these only may be obtained a knowledge of the fiery and audacious temper, unscrupulous selfishness, profound dissimulation, and singular fertility in resources, of Victor—the extreme and painful sensibility, prolonged immaturity of powers, earnest good purpose and vacillating will of Charles—the noble and right woman's manliness of his wife—and the ill-considered rascality and subsequent better-advised rectitude of D'Ormea. When I say, therefore, that I cannot but believe my statement (combining as it does what appears correct in Voltaire and plausible in Condorcet) more true to person and thing than any it has hitherto been my fortune to meet with, no doubt my word will be taken, and my evidence spared as readily.

R. B.

LONDON: 1842.

PERSONS.

VICTOR AMADEUS, *first King of Sardinia.*
CHARLES EMMANUEL, *his son, Prince of Piedmont.*
POLYXENA, *wife of Charles.*
D'ORMEA, *minister.*

SCENE.—*The Council Chamber of Rivoli Palace, near Turin, communicating with a Hall at the back, an Apartment to the left, and another to the right of the stage.*

TIME, 1730–1731.

KING VICTOR & KING CHARLES.

1842.

FIRST YEAR, 1730.—KING VICTOR.

Part I.

CHARLES, POLYXENA.

Charles. You think so? Well, I do not.
Polyxena. My beloved,
All must clear up; we shall be happy yet:
This cannot last for ever—oh, may change
To-day or any day!
Charles. —May change? Ah yes—
May change!
Polyxena. Endure it, then.
Charles. No doubt, a life
Like this drags on, now better and now worse.
My father may . . . may take to loving me;
And he may take D'Ormea closer yet
To counsel him;—may even cast off her

—That bad Sebastian; but he also may
. . . Or no, Polyxena, my only friend,
He may not force you from me?
Polyxena. Now, force me
From you!—me, close by you as if there gloomed
No Sebastians, no D'Ormeas on our path—
At Rivoli or Turin, still at hand,
Arch-counsellor, prime confidant . . . force me!
Charles. Because I felt as sure, as I feel sure
We clasp hands now, of being happy once.
Young was I, quite neglected, nor concerned
By the world's business that engrossed so much
My father and my brother: if I peered
From out my privacy,—amid the crash
And blaze of nations, domineered those two.
'T was war, peace—France our foe, now—England, friend—
In love with Spain—at feud with Austria! Well—
I wondered, laughed a moment's laugh for pride
In the chivalrous couple, then let drop
My curtain—"I am out of it," I said—
When . . .
Polyxena. You have told me, Charles.
Charles. Polyxena—
When suddenly,—a warm March day, just that!
Just so much sunshine as the cottage child

Basks in delighted, while the cottager
Takes off his bonnet, as he ceases work,
To catch the more of it—and it must fall
Heavily on my brother! Had you seen
Philip—the lion-featured! not like me!

Polyxena. I know—

Charles. And Philip's mouth yet fast to mine,
His dead cheek on my cheek, his arm still round
My neck,—they bade me rise, "for I was heir
To the Duke," they said, "the right hand of the Duke:"
Till then he was my father, not the Duke.
So . . . let me finish . . . the whole intricate
World's-business their dead boy was born to, I
Must conquer,—ay, the brilliant thing he was,
I, of a sudden must be: my faults, my follies,
—All bitter truths were told me, all at once,
To end the sooner. What I simply styled
Their overlooking me, had been contempt:
How should the Duke employ himself, forsooth,
With such an one, while lordly Philip rode
By him their Turin through? But he was punished,
And must put up with—me! 'T was sad enough
To learn my future portion and submit.
And then the wear and worry, blame on blame!
For, spring-sounds in my ears, spring-smells about,
How could I but grow dizzy in their pent

Dim palace-rooms at first? My mother's look
As they discussed my insignificance,
She and my father, and I sitting by,—
I bore; I knew how brave a son they missed:
Philip had gaily run state-papers through,
While Charles was spelling at them painfully!
But Victor was my father spite of that.
"Duke Victor's entire life has been," I said,
"Innumerable efforts to one end;
"And on the point now of that end's success,
"Our Ducal turning to a Kingly crown,
"Where 's time to be reminded 't is his child
"He spurns?" And so I suffered—scarcely suffered,
Since I had you at length!

Polyxena. —To serve in place
Of monarch, minister, and mistress, Charles.

Charles. But, once that crown obtained, then was 't not like
Our lot would alter? "When he rests, takes breath,
"Glances around, sees who there 's left to love—
"Now that my mother 's dead, sees I am left—
"Is it not like he 'll love me at the last?"
Well, Savoy turns Sardinia; the Duke 's King:
Could I—precisely then—could you expect
His harshness to redouble? These few months
Have been . . . have been . . . Polyxena, do you

And God conduct me, or I lose myself!
What would he have? What is 't they want with me?
Him with this mistress and this minister,
—You see me and you hear him; judge us both!
Pronounce what I should do, Polyxena!
Polyxena. Endure, endure, beloved! Say you not
He is your father? All 's so incident
To novel sway! Beside, our life must change:
Or you 'll acquire his kingcraft, or he 'll find
Harshness a sorry way of teaching it.
I bear this—not that there 's so much to bear.
Charles. You bear? Do not I know that you, tho'
bound
To silence for my sake, are perishing
Piecemeal beside me? And how otherwise
When every creephole from the hideous Court
Is stopped: the Minister to dog me, here—
The Mistress posted to entrap you, there!
And thus shall we grow old in such a life;
Not careless, never estranged,—but old: to alter
Our life, there is so much to alter!
Polyxena. Come—
Is it agreed that we forego complaint
Even at Turin, yet complain we here
At Rivoli? 'T were wiser you announced
Our presence to the King. What 's now afoot

I wonder? Not that any more 's to dread
Than every day's embarrassment: but guess
For me, why train so fast succeeded train
On the high-road, each gayer still than each!
I noticed your Archbishop's pursuivant,
The sable cloak and silver cross; such pomp
Bodes . . . what now, Charles? Can you conceive?

Charles. Not I.

Polyxena. A matter of some moment.

Charles. There 's our life!

Which of the group of loiterers that stare
From the lime-avenue, divines that I—
About to figure presently, he thinks,
In face of all assembled—am the one
Who knows precisely least about it?

Polyxena. Tush!

D'Ormea's contrivance!

Charles. Ay, how otherwise
Should the young Prince serve for the old King's foil?
—So that the simplest courtier may remark
'T were idle raising parties for a Prince
Content to linger the Court's laughing-stock.
Something, 't is like, about that weary business

[*Pointing to papers he has laid down, and which* POLYXENA *examines.*

—Not that I comprehend three words, of course,

After all last night's study.

Polyxena. The faint heart!
Why, as we rode and you rehearsed just now
Its substance . . . (that 's the folded speech I mean,
Concerning the Reduction of the Fiefs)
—What would you have?—I fancied while you spoke,
Some tones were just your father's.

Charles. Flattery!

Polyxena. I fancied so:—and here lurks, sure enough
My note upon the Spanish Claims! You 've mastered
The fief-speech thoroughly: this other, mind,
Is an opinion you deliver,—stay,
Best read it slowly over once to me;
Read—there 's bare time; you read it firmly—loud
—Rather loud, looking in his face,—don't sink
Your eye once—ay, thus! "If Spain claims . . ." begin
—Just as you look at me!

Charles. At you! Oh truly,
You have I seen, say, marshalling your troops,
Dismissing councils, or, through doors ajar,
Head sunk on hand, devoured by slow chagrins
—Then radiant, for a crown had all at once
Seemed possible again! I can behold
Him, whose least whisper ties my spirit fast,
In this sweet brow, nought could divert me from
Save objects like Sebastian's shameless lip,

Or worse, the clipped grey hair and dead white face
And dwindling eye as if it ached with guile,
D'Ormea wears . . .

[*As he kisses her, enter from the* KING'S *apartment*
D'ORMEA.

I said he would divert
My kisses from your brow!

D'Ormea [*aside*]. Here! So, King Victor
Spoke truth for once: and who 's ordained, but I
To make that memorable? Both in call,
As he declared. Were 't better gnash the teeth,
Or laugh outright now?

Charles [*to* POLYXENA]. What 's his visit for?

D'Ormea [*aside*]. I question if they even speak to me.

Polyxena [*to* CHARLES]. Face the man! He 'll suppose you fear him, else.

[*Aloud.*] The Marquis bears the King's command, no doubt?

D'Ormea [*aside*]. Precisely!—If I threatened him, perhaps?
Well, this at least is punishment enough!
Men used to promise punishment would come.

Charles. Deliver the King's message, Marquis!

D'Ormea [*aside*]. Ah—
So anxious for his fate? [*Aloud.*] A word, my Prince,

Before you see your father—just one word
Of counsel!

Charles. Oh, your counsel certainly!
Polyxena, the Marquis counsels us!
Well, sir? Be brief, however!

D'Ormea. What? You know
As much as I?—preceded me, most like,
In knowledge! So! ('T is in his eye, beside—
His voice: he knows it, and his heart 's on flame
Already.) You surmise why you, myself,
Del Borgo, Spava, fifty nobles more,
Are summoned thus?

Charles. Is the Prince used to know,
At any time, the pleasure of the King,
Before his minister?—Polyxena,
Stay here till I conclude my task: I feel
Your presence (smile not) through the walls, and take
Fresh heart. The King 's within that chamber?

D'Ormea [*passing the table whereon a paper lies, exclaims, as he glances at it*]. "Spain!"

Polyxena [*aside to* CHARLES]. Tarry awhile: what ails the minister?

D'Ormea. Madam, I do not often trouble you.
The Prince loathes, and you scorn me—let that pass!
But since it touches him and you, not me,
Bid the Prince listen!

Polyxena [*to* CHARLES]. Surely you will listen!
—Deceit?—those fingers crumpling up his vest?
Charles. Deceitful to the very fingers' ends!
D'Ormea [*who has approached them, overlooks the other paper* CHARLES *continues to hold*].
My project for the Fiefs! As I supposed!
Sir, I must give you light upon those measures
—For this is mine, and that I spied of Spain,
Mine too!
Charles. Release me! Do you gloze on me
Who bear in the world's face (that is, the world
You make for me at Turin) your contempt?
—Your measures?—When was not a hateful task
D'Ormea's imposition? Leave my robe!
What post can I bestow, what grant concede?
Or do you take me for the King?
D'Ormea. Not I!
Not yet for King,—not for, as yet, thank God,
One who in . . . shall I say a year, a month?
Ay!—shall be wretcheder than e'er was slave
In his Sardinia.—Europe's spectacle
And the world's bye-word! What? The Prince aggrieved
That I excluded him our counsels? Here
[*Touching the paper in* CHARLES'S *hand.*
Accept a method of extorting gold

From Savoy's nobles, who must wring its worth
In silver first from tillers of the soil,
Whose hinds again have to contribute brass
To make up the amount: there 's counsel, sir,
My counsel, one year old; and the fruit, this—
Savoy 's become a mass of misery
And wrath, which one man has to meet—the King:
You 're not the King! Another counsel, sir!
Spain entertains a project (here it lies)
Which, guessed, makes Austria offer that same King
Thus much to baffle Spain; he promises;
Then comes Spain, breathless lest she be forestalled,
Her offer follows; and he promises . . .

Charles. —Promises, sir, when he has just agreed
To Austria's offer?

D'Ormea. That 's a counsel, Prince!
But past our foresight, Spain and Austria (choosing
To make their quarrel up between themselves
Without the intervention of a friend)
Produce both treaties, and both promises . . .

Charles. How?

D'Ormea. Prince, a counsel! And the fruit of that?
Both parties covenant afresh, to fall
Together on their friend, blot out his name,
Abolish him from Europe. So, take note,
Here 's Austria and here 's Spain to fight against:

And what sustains the King but Savoy here,
A miserable people mad with wrongs?
You 're not the King!
Charles. Polyxena, you said
All would clear up: all does clear up to me.
D'Ormea. Clear up! 'T is no such thing to envy, then?
You see the King's state in its length and breadth?
You blame me now for keeping you aloof
From counsels and the fruit of counsels? Wait
Till I explain this morning's business!
Charles [*aside*]. No—
Stoop to my father, yes,—D'Ormea, no:
—The King's son, not to the King's counsellor!
I will do something, but at least retain
The credit of my deed. [*Aloud*]. Then it is this
You now expressly come to tell me?
D'Ormea. This
To tell! You apprehend me?
Charles. Perfectly.
Further, D'Ormea, you have shown yourself,
For the first time these many weeks and months,
Disposed to do my bidding?
D'Ormea. From the heart!
Charles. Acquaint my father, first, I wait his pleasure
Next . . . or, I 'll tell you at a fitter time.
Acquaint the King!

D'Ormea [*aside*]. If I 'scape Victor yet!
First, to prevent this stroke at me: if not,—
Then, to avenge it! [*To* CHARLES.] Gracious sir, I
go. [*Goes.*

Charles. God, I forbore! Which more offends, that
man
Or that man's master? Is it come to this?
Have they supposed (the sharpest insult yet)
I needed e'en his intervention? No!
No—dull am I, conceded,—but so dull,
Scarcely! Their step decides me.

Polyxena. How decides?

Charles. You would be freed D'Ormea's eye and
hers?
—Could fly the court with me and live content?
So, this it is for which the knights assemble!
The whispers and the closeting of late,
The savageness and insolence of old,
—For this!

Polyxena. What mean you?

Charles. How? You fail to catch
Their clever plot? I missed it, but could you?
These last two months of care to inculcate
How dull I am,—D'Ormea's present visit
To prove that, being dull, I might be worse
Were I a King—as wretched as now dull—

You recognize in it no winding up
Of a long plot?

Polyxena. Why should there be a plot?

Charles. The crown 's secure now; I should shame the crown—
An old complaint; the point is, how to gain
My place for one, more fit in Victor's eyes,
His mistress the Sebastian's child.

Polyxena. In truth?

Charles. They dare not quite dethrone Sardinia's Prince:
But they may descant on my dulness till
They sting me into even praying them
Grant leave to hide my head, resign my state,
And end the coil. Not see now? In a word,
They 'd have me tender them myself my rights
As one incapable;—some cause for that,
Since I delayed thus long to see their drift!
I shall apprise the King he may resume
My rights this moment.

Polyxena. Pause! I dare not think
So ill of Victor.

Charles. Think no ill of him!

Polyxena. —Nor think him, then, so shallow as to suffer
His purpose be divined thus easily.

And yet—you are the last of a great line;
There 's a great heritage at stake; new days
Seemed to await this newest of the realms
Of Europe:—Charles, you must withstand this!
Charles. Ah—
You dare not then renounce the splendid Court
For one whom all the world despises? Speak!
Polyxena. My gentle husband, speak I will, and truth.
Were this as you believe, and I once sure
Your duty lay in so renouncing rule,
I could . . . could? Oh what happiness it were—
To live, my Charles, and die, alone with you!
Charles. I grieve I asked you. To the presence, then!
By this, D'Ormea acquaints the King, no doubt,
He fears I am too simple for mere hints,
And that no less will serve than Victor's mouth
Demonstrating in council what I am.
I have not breathed, I think, these many years!
Polyxena. Why, it may be!—if he desire to wed
That woman, call legitimate her child.
Charles. You see as much? Oh, let his will have way!
You 'll not repent confiding in me, love?
There 's many a brighter spot in Piedmont, far,
Than Rivoli. I 'll seek him: or, suppose
You hear first how I mean to speak my mind?

—Loudly and firmly both, this time, be sure!
I yet may see your Rhine-land, who can tell?
Once away, ever then away! I breathe.

Polyxena. And I too breathe.

Charles. Come, my Polyxena!

KING VICTOR.

PART II.

Enter King VICTOR, *bearing the Regalia on a cushion, from his apartment. He calls loudly.*

Victor. D'Ormea!—for patience fails me, treading thus
Among the obscure trains I have laid,—my knights
Safe in the hall here—in that anteroom,
My son,—D'Ormea, where? Of this, one touch—
[*Laying down the crown.*
This fireball to these mute black cold trains—then
Outbreak enough!
[*Contemplating it.*] To lose all, after all!
This, glancing o'er my house for ages—shaped,
Brave meteor, like the crown of Cyprus now,
Jerusalem, Spain, England, every change
The braver,—and when I have clutched a prize
My ancestry died wan with watching for,
To lose it!—by a slip, a fault, a trick
Learnt to advantage once and not unlearned
When past the use,—"just this once more" (I thought)
"Use it with Spain and Austria happily,

"And then away with trick!" An oversight
I 'd have repaired thrice over, any time
These fifty years, must happen now! There 's peace
At length; and I, to make the most of peace,
Ventured my project on our people here,
As needing not their help: which Europe knows,
And means, cold-blooded, to dispose herself
(Apart from plausibilities of war)
To crush the new-made King—who ne'er till now
Feared her. As Duke, I lost each foot of earth
And laughed at her: my name was left, my sword
Left, all was left! But she can take, she knows,
This crown, herself conceded . . . That 's to try,
Kind Europe! My career 's not closed as yet!
This boy was ever subject to my will,
Timid and tame—the fitter! D'Ormea, too—
What if the sovereign also rid himself
Of thee, his prime of parasites?—I delay!
D'Ormea! [*As* D'ORMEA *enters, the* KING *seats himself.*
My son, the Prince—attends he?
D'Ormea. Sir,
He does attend. The crown prepared!—it seems
That you persist in your resolve.
Victor. Who's come?
The chancellor and the chamberlain? My knights?
D'Ormea. The whole Annunziata. If, my liege,

Your fortune had not tottered worse than now . . .

Victor. Del Borgo has drawn up the schedules? mine—
My son's, too? Excellent! Only, beware
Of the least blunder, or we look but fools.
First, you read the Annulment of the Oaths;
Del Borgo follows . . . no, the Prince shall sign;
Then let Del Borgo read the Instrument:
On which, I enter.

D'Ormea. Sir, this may be truth;
You, sir, may do as you affect—may break
Your engine, me, to pieces: try at least
If not a spring remain worth saving! Take
My counsel as I 've counselled many times!
What if the Spaniard and the Austrian threat?
There 's England, Holland, Venice—which ally
Select you?

Victor. Aha! Come, D'Ormea,—"truth"
Was on your lip a minute since. Allies?
I 've broken faith with Venice, Holland, England
—As who knows if not you?

D'Ormea. But why with me
Break faith—with one ally, your best, break faith?

Victor. When first I stumbled on you, Marquis—'t was
At Mondovi—a little lawyer's clerk . . .

D'Ormea. Therefore your soul's ally!—who brought
you through

Your quarrel with the Pope, at pains enough—
Who simply echoed you in these affairs—
On whom you cannot therefore visit these
Affairs' ill-fortune—whom you trust to guide
You safe (yes, on my soul) through these affairs!

Victor. I was about to notice, had you not
Prevented me, that since that great town kept
With its chicane D'Ormea's satchel stuffed
And D'Ormea's self sufficiently recluse,
He missed a sight,—my naval armament
When I burned Toulon. How the skiff exults
Upon the galliot's wave!—rises its height,
O'ertops it even; but the great wave bursts,
And hell-deep in the horrible profound
Buries itself the galliot: shall the skiff
Think to escape the sea's black trough in turn?
Apply this: you have been my minister
—Next me, above me possibly;—sad post,
Huge care, abundant lack of peace of mind;
Who would desiderate the eminence?
You gave your soul to get it; you 'd yet give
Your soul to keep it, as I mean you shall,
D'Ormea! What if the wave ebbed with me?
Whereas it cants you to another crest;
I toss you to my son; ride out your ride!

D'Ormea. Ah, you so much despise me?

Victor. You, D'Ormea?
Nowise: and I 'll inform you why. A king
Must in his time have many ministers,
And I 've been rash enough to part with mine
When I thought proper. Of the tribe, not one
(. . . Or wait, did Pianezze?—ah, just the same!)
Not one of them, ere his remonstrance reached
The length of yours, but has assured me (commonly
Standing much as you stand,—or nearer, say,
The door to make his exit on his speech)
—I should repent of what I did. D'Ormea,
Be candid, you approached it when I bade you
Prepare the schedules! But you stopped in time,
You have not so assured me: how should I
Despise you then?

Enter CHARLES.

Victor [*changing his tone*]. Are you instructed? Do
My order, point by point! About it, sir!

D'Ormea. You so despise me! [*Aside.*] One last stay
remains—
The boy's discretion there.
[*To* CHARLES.] For your sake, Prince,
I pleaded, wholly in your interest,
To save you from this fate!

Charles [*aside*]. Must I be told
The Prince was supplicated for—by him?

Victor [*to* D'Ormea]. Apprise Del Borgo, Spava, and the rest,
Our son attends them; then return.
D'Ormea. One word!
Charles [*aside*]. A moment's pause and they would drive me hence,
I do believe!
D'Ormea [*aside*]. Let but the boy be firm!
Victor. You disobey?
Charles [*to* D'Ormea]. You do not disobey
Me, at least? Did you promise that or no?
D'Ormea. Sir, I am yours: what would you? Yours am I!
Charles. When I have said what I shall say, 't is like
Your face will ne'er again disgust me. Go!
Through you, as through a breast of glass, I see.
And for your conduct, from my youth till now,
Take my contempt! You might have spared me much.
Secured me somewhat, nor so harmed yourself:
That 's over now. Go, ne'er to come again!
D'Ormea. As son, the father—father as, the son!
My wits! My wits! [*Goes.*
Victor [*seated*]. And you, what meant you, pray,
Speaking thus to D'Ormea?
Charles. Let us not
Waste words upon D'Ormea! Those I spent

Have half unsettled what I came to say.
His presence vexes to my very soul.
Victor. One called to manage a kingdom, Charles, needs heart
To bear up under worse annoyances
Than seems D'Ormea—to me, at least.
Charles [*aside*]. Ah, good!
He keeps me to the point. Then be it so.
[*Aloud.*] Last night, sir, brought me certain papers—these—
To be reported on,—your way of late.
Is it last night's result that you demand?
Victor. For God's sake, what has night brought forth? Pronounce
The . . . what 's your word?—result!
Charles. Sir, that had proved
Quite worthy of your sneer, no doubt:—a few
Lame thoughts, regard for you alone could wring,
Lame as they are, from brains like mine, believe!
As 't is, sir, I am spared both toil and sneer.
These are the papers.
Victor. Well, sir? I suppose
You hardly burned them. Now for your result!
Charles. I never should have done great things of course,
But . . . oh my father, had you loved me more!

Victor. Loved? [*Aside.*] Has D'Ormea played me false,
I wonder?
[*Aloud.*] Why, Charles, a king's love is diffused—yourself
May overlook, perchance, your part in it.
Our monarchy is absolutest now
In Europe, or my trouble 's thrown away.
I love, my mode, that subjects each and all
May have the power of loving, all and each,
Their mode: I doubt not, many have their sons
To trifle with, talk soft to, all day long:
I have that crown, this chair, D'Ormea, Charles!
Charles. 'Tis well I am a subject then, not you.
Victor [*aside*]. D'Ormea has told him everything.
[*Aloud.*] Aha!
I apprehend you: when all 's said, you take
Your private station to be prized beyond
My own, for instance?
Charles. —Do and ever did
So take it: 't is the method you pursue
That grieves . . .
Victor. These words! Let me express, my friend,
Your thoughts. You penetrate what I supposed
Secret. D'Ormea plies his trade betimes!
I purpose to resign my crown to you.
Charles. To me?
Victor. Now,—in that chamber.

Charles. You resign
The crown to me?
Victor. And time enough, Charles, sure?
Confess with me, at four-and-sixty years
A crown 's a load. I covet quiet once
Before I die, and summoned you for that.
Charles. 'T is I will speak: you ever hated me.
I bore it,—have insulted me, borne too—
Now you insult yourself; and I remember
What I believed you, what you really are,
And cannot bear it. What! My life has passed
Under your eye, tormented as you know,—
Your whole sagacities, one after one,
At leisure brought to play on me—to prove me
A fool, I thought and I submitted; now
You 'd prove . . . what would you prove me?
Victor. This to me?
I hardly know you!
Charles. Know me? Oh indeed
You do not! Wait till I complain next time
Of my simplicity!—for here 's a sage
Knows the world well, is not to be deceived,
And his experience and his Macchiavels,
D'Ormeas, teach him—what?—that I this while
Have envied him his crown! He has not smiled,
I warrant,—has not eaten, drunk, nor slept,

For I was plotting with my Princess yonder!
Who knows what we might do or might not do?
Go now, be politic, astound the world!
That sentry in the antechamber—nay,
The varlet who disposed this precious trap
[*Pointing to the crown.*
That was to take me—ask them if they think
Their own sons envy them their posts!—Know me!

Victor. But you know me, it seems: so, learn in brief
My pleasure. This assembly is convened . . .

Charles. Tell me, that woman put it in your head!
You were not sole contriver of the scheme,
My father!

Victor. Now observe me, sir! I jest
Seldom—on these points, never. Here, I say,
The knights assemble to see me concede,
And you accept, Sardinia's crown.

Charles. Farewell!
'T were vain to hope to change this: I can end it.
Not that I cease from being yours, when sunk
Into obscurity: I'll die for you,
But not annoy you with my presence. Sir,
Farewell! Farewell!

Enter D'Ormea.

D'Ormea [*aside*]. Ha, sure he 's changed again—

Means not to fall into the cunning trap!
Then Victor, I shall yet escape you, Victor!
Victor [*suddenly placing the crown upon the head of* CHARLES]. D'Ormea, your King!
[*To* CHARLES.] My son, obey me! Charles,
Your father, clearer-sighted than yourself,
Decides it must be so. 'Faith, this looks real!
My reasons after; reason upon reason
After: but now, obey me! Trust in me!
By this, you save Sardinia, you save me!
Why, the boy swoons! [*To* D'ORMEA.] Come this side!
D'Ormea [*as* CHARLES *turns from him to* VICTOR]. You persist?
Victor. Yes, I conceive the gesture's meaning. 'Faith,
He almost seems to hate you: how is that?
Be re-assured, my Charles! Is 't over now?
Then, Marquis, tell the new King what remains
To do! A moment's work. Del Borgo reads
The Act of Abdication out, you sign it,
Then I sign; after that, come back to me.
D'Ormea. Sir, for the last time, pause!
Victor. Five minutes longer
I am your sovereign, Marquis. Hesitate—
And I 'll so turn those minutes to account
That . . . Ay, you recollect me! [*Aside.*] Could I bring

My foolish mind to undergo the reading
That Act of Abdication!

[*As* CHARLES *motions* D'ORMEA *to precede him.*

Thanks, dear Charles!

[CHARLES *and* D'ORMEA *retire.*

Victor. A novel feature in the boy,—indeed
Just what I feared he wanted most. Quite right,
This earnest tone: your truth, now, for effect!
It answers every purpose: with that look,
That voice,—I hear him: "I began no treaty,"
(He speaks to Spain), "nor ever dreamed of this
"You show me; this I from my soul regret;
"But if my father signed it, bid not me
"Dishonour him—who gave me all, beside:"
And, "True," says Spain, "'t were harsh to visit that
"Upon the Prince." Then come the nobles trooping:
"I grieve at these exactions—I had cut
"This hand off ere impose them; but shall I
"Undo my father's deed?"—and they confer:
"Doubtless he was no party, after all;
"Give the Prince time!"

Ay, give us time, but time!
Only, he must not, when the dark day comes,
Refer our friends to me and frustrate all.
We 'll have no child's play, no desponding fits,
No Charles at each cross turn entreating Victor

To take his crown again. Guard against that!

Enter D'ORMEA.

Long live King Charles!

No—Charles's counsellor!

Well, is it over, Marquis? Did I jest?

D'Ormea. "King Charles!" What then may you be?

Victor. Anything!

A country gentleman that, cured of bustle,
Now beats a quick retreat toward Chambery,
Would hunt and hawk and leave you noisy folk
To drive your trade without him. I'm Count Remont—
Count Tende—any little place's Count!

D'Ormea. Then Victor, Captain against Catinat
At Staffarde, where the French beat you; and Duke
At Turin, where you beat the French; King late
Of Savoy, Piedmont, Montferrat, Sardinia,
—Now, "any little place's Count"—

Victor. Proceed!

D'Ormea. Breaker of vows to God, who crowned you first;
Breaker of vows to man, who kept you since;
Most profligate to me who outraged God
And man to serve you, and am made pay crimes
I was but privy to, by passing thus
To your imbecile son—who, well you know,

Must—(when the people here, and nations there,
Clamour for you the main delinquent, slipped
From King to—"Count of any little place")
Must needs surrender me, all in his reach,—
I, sir, forgive you: for I see the end—
See you on your return—(you will return)—
To him you trust, a moment . . .

Victor. Trust him? How?
My poor man, merely a prime-minister,
Make me know where my trust errs!

D'Ormea. In his fear,
His love, his—— but discover for yourself
What you are weakest, trusting in!

Victor. Aha,
D'Ormea, not a shrewder scheme than this
In your repertory? You know old Victor—
Vain, choleric, inconstant, rash—(I 've heard
Talkers who little thought the King so close)
Felicitous now, were 't not, to provoke him
To clean forget, one minute afterward,
His solemn act, and call the nobles back
And pray them give again the very power
He has abjured?—for the dear sake of what?
Vengeance on you, D'Ormea! No: such am I,
Count Tende or Count anything you please,
—Only, the same that did the things you say,

And, among other things you say not, used
Your finest fibre, meanest muscle,—you
I used, and now, since you will have it so,
Leave to your fate—mere lumber in the midst,
You and your works. Why, what on earth beside
Are you made for, you sort of ministers?

D'Ormea. Not left, though, to my fate! Your witless son
Has more wit than to load himself with lumber:
He foils you that way, and I follow you.

Victor. Stay with my son—protect the weaker side!

D'Ormea. Ay, to be tossed the people like a rag,
And flung by them for Spain and Austria's sport,
Abolishing the record of your part
In all this perfidy!

Victor. Prevent, beside,
My own return!

D'Ormea. That 's half prevented now!
'T will go hard but you find a wondrous charm
In exile, to discredit me. The Alps,
Silk-mills to watch, vines asking vigilance—
Hounds open for the stag, your hawk 's a-wing—
Brave days that wait the Louis of the South,
Italy's Janus!

Victor. So, the lawyer's clerk
Won't tell me that I shall repent!

D'Ormea. You give me
Full leave to ask if you repent?

Victor. Whene'er
Sufficient time 's elapsed for that, you judge!

[*Shouts inside* "KING CHARLES!"

D'Ormea. Do you repent?

Victor [*after a slight pause*]. . . . I 've kept them waiting? Yes!
Come in, complete the Abdication, sir! [*They go out.*

Enter POLYXENA.

Polyxena. A shout! The sycophants are free of Charles!
Oh is not this like Italy? No fruit
Of his or my distempered fancy, this,
But just an ordinary fact! Beside,
Here they 've set forms for such proceedings; Victor
Imprisoned his own mother: he should know,
If any, how a son 's to be deprived
Of a son's right. Our duty 's palpable.
Ne'er was my husband for the wily king
And the unworthy subjects: be it so!
Come you safe out of them, my Charles! Our life
Grows not the broad and dazzling life, I dreamed
Might prove your lot; for strength was shut in you
None guessed but I—strength which, untramelled once,

Had little shamed your vaunted ancestry—
Patience and self-devotion, fortitude,
Simplicity and utter truthfulness
—All which, they shout to lose!
So, now my work
Begins—to save him from regret. Save Charles
Regret?—the noble nature! He 's not made
Like these Italians: 't is a German soul.

CHARLES *enters crowned.*

Oh, where 's the King's heir? Gone!—the Crown
Prince? Gone!—
Where 's Savoy? Gone!—Sardinia? Gone! But
Charles
Is left! And when my Rhine-land bowers arrive,
If he looked almost handsome yester-twilight
As his grey eyes seemed widening into black
Because I praised him, then how will he look?
Farewell, you stripped and whited mulberry-trees
Bound each to each by lazy ropes of vine!
Now I 'll teach you my language: I 'm not forced
To speak Italian now, Charles?
[*She sees the crown.*] What is this?
Answer me—who has done this? Answer!
Charles. He!
I am King now.

Polyxena. Oh worst, worst, worst of all!
Tell me! What, Victor? He has made you King?
What 's he then? What 's to follow this? You, King?
Charles. Have I done wrong? Yes, for you were not by!
Polyxena. Tell me from first to last.
Charles. Hush—a new world
Brightens before me; he is moved away
—The dark form that eclipsed it, he subsides
Into a shape supporting me like you,
And I, alone, tend upward, more and more
Tend upward: I am grown Sardinia's King.
Polyxena. Now stop: was not this Victor, Duke of Savoy
At ten years old?
Charles. He was.
Polyxena. And the Duke spent
Since then, just four-and-fifty years in toil
To be—what?
Charles. King.
Polyxena. Then why unking himself?
Charles. Those years are cause enough.
Polyxena. The only cause?
Charles. Some new perplexities.
Polyxena. Which you can solve
Although he cannot?

Charles. He assures me so.
Polyxena. And this he means shall last—how long?
Charles. How long?
Think you I fear the perils I confront?
He 's praising me before the people's face—
My people!
Polyxena. Then he 's changed—grown kind, the King?
Where can the trap be?
Charles. Heart and soul I pledge!
My father, could I guard the crown you gained,
Transmit as I received it,—all good else
Would I surrender!
Polyxena. Ah, it opens then
Before you, all you dreaded formerly?
You are rejoiced to be a king, my Charles?
Charles. So much to dare? The better;—much to dread?
The better. I 'll adventure though alone.
Triumph or die, there 's Victor still to witness
Who dies or triumphs—either way, alone!
Polyxena. Once I had found my share in triumph, Charles,
Or death.
Charles. But you are I! But you I call
To take, Heaven's proxy, vows I tendered Heaven
A moment since. I will deserve the crown!

Polyxena. You will. [*Aside.*] No doubt it were a
glorious thing
For any people, if a heart like his
Ruled over it. I would I saw the trap.

Enter VICTOR.

'T is he must show me.
Victor. So, the mask falls off
An old man's foolish love at last. Spare thanks!
I know you, and Polyxena I know.
Here 's Charles—I am his guest now—does he bid me
Be seated? And my light-haired blue-eyed child
Must not forget the old man far away
At Chambery, who dozes while she reigns.
Polyxena. Most grateful shall we now be, talking least
Of gratitude—indeed of anything
That hinders what yourself must need to say
To Charles.
Charles. Pray speak, sir!
Victor. 'Faith, not much to say:
Only what shows itself, you once i' the point
Of sight. You 're now the King: you 'll comprehend
Much you may oft have wondered at—the shifts,
Dissimulation, wiliness I showed.
For what 's our post? Here 's Savoy and here 's
Piedmont,

Here 's Montferrat—a breadth here, a space there—
To o'ersweep all these, what 's one weapon worth?
I often think of how they fought in Greece:
(Or Rome, which was it? You 're the scholar, Charles!)
You made a front-thrust? But if your shield too
Were not adroitly planted, some shrewd knave
Reached you behind; and him foiled, straight if thong
And handle of that shield were not cast loose,
And you enabled to outstrip the wind,
Fresh foes assailed you, either side; 'scape these,
And reach your place of refuge—e'en then, odds
If the gate opened unless breath enough
Were left in you to make its lord a speech.
Oh, you will see!

Charles. No: straight on shall I go,
Truth helping; win with it or die with it.

Victor. 'Faith, Charles, you 're not made Europe's fighting-man!
The barrier-guarder, if you please. You clutch
Hold and consolidate, with envious France
This side, with Austria that, the territory
I held—ay, and will hold . . . which *you* shall hold
Despite the couple! But I 've surely earned
Exemption from these weary politics,
—The privilege to prattle with my son
And daughter here, though Europe wait the while.

Polyxena. Nay, sir,—at Chambery, away for ever,
As soon you will be, 't is farewell we bid you:
Turn these few fleeting moments to account!
'T is just as though it were a death.
Victor. Indeed!
Polyxena [*aside*]. Is the trap there?
Charles. Ay, call this parting—death!
The sacreder your memory becomes.
If I misrule Sardinia, how bring back
My father?
Victor. I mean . . .
Polyxena [*who watches* VICTOR *narrowly this while*].
Your father does not mean
You should be ruling for your father's sake:
It is your people must concern you wholly
Instead of him. You mean this, sir? (He drops
My hand!)
Charles. That people is now part of me.
Victor. About the people! I took certain measures
Some short time since . . . Oh, I know well, you know
But little of my measures! These affect
The nobles; we 've resumed some grants, imposed
A tax or two: prepare yourself, in short,
For clamour on that score. Mark me: you yield
No jot of aught entrusted you!
Polyxena. No jot
You yield!

Charles. My father, when I took the oath,
Although my eye might stray in search of yours,
I heard it, understood it, promised God
What you require. Till from this eminence
He move me, here I keep, nor shall concede
The meanest of my rights.

Victor [*aside*]. The boy 's a fool!
—Or rather, I 'm a fool: for, what 's wrong here?
To-day the sweets of reigning: let to-morrow
Be ready with its bitters.

Enter D'ORMEA.

There 's beside
Somewhat to press upon your notice first.

Charles. Then why delay it for an instant, sir?
That Spanish claim perchance? And, now you speak,
—This morning, my opinion was mature,
Which, boy-like, I was bashful in producing
To one I ne'er am like to fear in future!
My thought is formed upon that Spanish claim.

Victor. Betimes indeed. Not now, Charles! You require
A host of papers on it.

D'Ormea [*coming forward*]. Here they are.
[*To* CHARLES.] I, sir, was minister and much beside
Of the late monarch; to say little, him

I served: on you I have, to say e'en less,
No claim. This case contains those papers: with them
I tender you my office.
Victor [*hastily.*] Keep him, Charles!
There 's reason for it—many reasons: you
Distrust him, nor are so far wrong there,—but
He 's mixed up in this matter—he 'll desire
To quit you, for occasions known to me:
Do not accept those reasons: have him stay!
Polyxena [*aside*]. His minister thrust on us!
Charles [*to* D'Ormea]. Sir, believe,
In justice to myself, you do not need
E'en this commending: howsoe'er might seem
My feelings toward you, as a private man,
They quit me in the vast and untried field
Of action. Though I shall myself (as late
In your own hearing I engaged to do)
Preside o'er my Sardinia, yet your help
Is necessary. Think the past forgotten
And serve me now!
D'Ormea. I did not offer you
My service—would that I could serve you, sir!
As for the Spanish matter . . .
Victor. But despatch
At least the dead, in my good daughter's phrase,
Before the living! Help to house me safe

Ere with D'Ormea you set the world a-gape!
Here is a paper—will you overlook
What I propose reserving for my needs?
I get as far from you as possible:
Here 's what I reckon my expenditure.
Charles [*reading*]. A miserable fifty thousand crowns—
Victor. Oh, quite enough for country gentlemen!
Beside the exchequer happens . . . but find out
All that, yourself!
Charles [*still reading*]. "Count Tende"—what means this?
Victor. Me: you were but an infant when I burst
Through the defile of Tende upon France.
Had only my allies kept true to me!
No matter. Tende 's, then, a name I take
Just as . . .
D'Ormea. —The Marchioness Sebastian takes
The name of Spigno.
Charles. How, sir?
Victor [*to* D'Ormea]. Fool! All that
Was for my own detailing. [*To* Charles.] That anon!
Charles [*to* D'Ormea]. Explain what you have said, sir!
D'Ormea. I supposed
The marriage of the King to her I named,
Profoundly kept a secret these few weeks,
Was not to be one, now he 's Count.

Polyxena [*aside*]. With us
The minister—with him the mistress!
Charles [*to* VICTOR]. No—
Tell me you have not taken her—that woman
To live with, past recall!
Victor. And where 's the crime . . .
Polyxena [*to* CHARLES]. True, sir, this is a matter past recall
And past your cognizance. A day before,
And you had been compelled to note this: now,—
Why note it? The King saved his House from shame:
What the Count did, is no concern of yours.
Charles [*after a pause*]. The Spanish claim, D'Ormea!
Victor. Why, my son,
I took some ill-advised . . . one's age, in fact,
Spoils everything: though I was overreached,
A younger brain, we 'll trust, may extricate
Sardinia readily. To-morrow, D'Ormea,
Inform the King!
D'Ormea [*without regarding* VICTOR, *and leisurely*]. Thus stands the case with Spain:
When first the Infant Carlos claimed his proper
Succession to the throne of Tuscany . . .
Victor. I tell you, that stands over! Let that rest!
There is the policy!
Charles [*to* D'ORMEA]. Thus much I know,
And more—too much: the remedy?

D'Ormea. Of course!
No glimpse of one.
Victor. No remedy at all!
It makes the remedy itself—time makes it.
D'Ormea [*to* CHARLES]. But if . . .
Victor [*still more hastily*]. In fine, I shall take care of that:
And, with another project that I have . . .
D'Ormea [*turning on him*]. Oh, since Count Tende means to take again
King Victor's crown!—
Polyxena [*throwing herself at* VICTOR'S *feet*]. E'en now retake it, sir!
Oh speak! We are your subjects both, once more!
Say it—a word effects it! You meant not,
Nor do mean now, to take it: but you must!
'T is in you—in your nature—and the shame 's
Not half the shame 't would grow to afterwards!
Charles. Polyxena!
Polyxena. A word recalls the knights—
Say it! What 's promising and what 's the past?
Say you are still King Victor!
D'Ormea. Better say
The Count repents, in brief! [VICTOR *rises.*
Charles. With such a crime
I have not charged you, sir!
Polyxena. (Charles turns from me!)

SECOND YEAR, 1731.—KING CHARLES.

PART I.

Enter Queen POLYXENA *and* D'ORMEA.—*A pause.*

Polyxena. And now, sir, what have you to say?

D'Ormea. Count Tende . . .

Polyxena. Affirm not I betrayed you; you resolve
On uttering this strange intelligence
—Nay, post yourself to find me ere I reach
The capital, because you know King Charles
Tarries a day or two at Evian baths
Behind me:—but take warning,—here and thus
[*Seating herself in the royal seat.*
I listen, if I listen—not your friend.
Explicitly the statement, if you still
Persist to urge it on me, must proceed:
I am not made for aught else.

D'Ormea. Good! Count Tende . . .

Polyxena. I, who mistrust you, shall acquaint King Charles
Who even more mistrusts you.

D'Ormea. Does he so?

Polyxena. Why should he not?

D'Ormea. Ay, why not? Motives, seek
You virtuous people, motives! Say, I serve
God at the devil's bidding—will that do?
I 'm proud: our people have been pacified,
Really I know not how—

Polyxena. By truthfulness.

D'Ormea. Exactly; that shows I had nought to do
With pacifying them. Our foreign perils
Also exceed my means to stay: but here
'T is otherwise, and my pride 's piqued. Count Tende
Completes a full year's absence: would you, madam,
Have the old monarch back, his mistress back,
His measures back? I pray you, act upon
My counsel, or they will be.

Polyxena. When?

D'Ormea. Let 's think.
Home-matters settled—Victor 's coming now;
Let foreign matters settle—Victor 's here
Unless I stop him; as I will, this way.

Polyxena [*reading the papers he presents*]. If this should prove a plot 'twixt you and Victor?
You seek annoyances to give the pretext
For what you say you fear.

D'Ormea. Oh, possibly!

I go for nothing. Only show King Charles
That thus Count Tende purposes return,
And style me his inviter, if you please!

Polyxena. Half of your tale is true; most like, the Count
Seeks to return: but why stay you with us?
To aid in such emergencies.

D'Ormea. Keep safe
Those papers: or, to serve me, leave no proof
I thus have counselled! When the Count returns,
And the King abdicates, 't will stead me little
To have thus counselled.

Polyxena. The King abdicate!

D'Ormea. He 's good, we knew long since—wise, we discover—
Firm, let us hope:—but I 'd have gone to work
With him away. Well!

[CHARLES *without.*] In the Council Chamber?

D'Ormea. All 's lost!

Polyxena. Oh, surely not King Charles! He 's changed—
That 's not this year's care-burthened voice and step:
'T is last year's step, the Prince's voice!

D'Ormea. I know.

[*Enter* CHARLES:—D'ORMEA *retiring a little.*

Charles. Now wish me joy, Polyxena! Wish it me

The old way! [*She embraces him.*
There was too much cause for that!
But I have found myself again. What news
At Turin? Oh, if you but felt the load
I 'm free of—free! I said this year would end
Or it, or me—but I am free, thank God!

Polyxena. How, Charles?

Charles. You do not guess? The day I found
Sardinia's hideous coil, at home, abroad,
And how my father was involved in it,—
Of course, I vowed to rest and smile no more
Until I cleared his name from obloquy.
We did the people right—'t was much to gain
That point, redress our nobles' grievance, too—
But that took place here, was no crying shame:
All must be done abroad,—if I abroad
Appeased the justly-angered Powers, destroyed
The scandal, took down Victor's name at last
From a bad eminence, I then might breathe
And rest! No moment was to lose. Behold
The proud result—a Treaty, Austria, Spain
Agree to—

D'Ormea [*aside*]. I shall merely stipulate
For an experienced headsman.

Charles. Not a soul
Is compromised: the blotted past 's a blank:

Even D'Ormea escapes unquestioned. See!
It reached me from Vienna; I remained
At Evian to despatch the Count his news;
'T is gone to Chambery a week ago—
And here am I: do I deserve to feel
Your warm white arms around me?

D'Ormea [*coming forward*]. He knows that?

Charles. What, in Heaven's name, means this?

D'Ormea. He knows that matters
Are settled at Vienna? Not too late!
Plainly, unless you post this very hour
Some man you trust (say, me) to Chambery
And take precautions I acquaint you with,
Your father will return here.

Charles. Are you crazed,
D'Ormea? Here? For what? As well return
To take his crown!

D'Ormea. He will return for that.

Charles [*to* POLYXENA]. You have not listened to this man?

Polyxena. He spoke
About your safety—and I listened.

[*He disengages himself from her arms.*

Charles [*to* D'ORMEA]. What
Apprised you of the Count's intentions?

D'Ormea. Me?

His heart, sir; you may not be used to read
Such evidence however; therefore read
[*Pointing to* POLYXENA'S *papers.*
My evidence.

Charles [*to* POLYXENA]. Oh, worthy this of you!
And of your speech I never have forgotten,
Though I professed forgetfulness; which haunts me
As if I did not know how false it was;
Which made me toil unconsciously thus long
That there might be no least occasion left
For aught of its prediction coming true!
And now, when there is left no least occasion
To instigate my father to such crime—
When I might venture to forget (I hoped)
That speech and recognize Polyxena—
Oh worthy, to revive, and tenfold worse,
That plague! D'Ormea at your ear, his slanders
Still in your hand! Silent?

Polyxena. As the wronged are.

Charles. And you, D'Ormea, since when you have presumed
To spy upon my father? I conceive
What that wise paper shows, and easily.
Since when?

D'Ormea. The when and where and how belong
To me. 'T is sad work, but I deal in such.

You ofttimes serve yourself; I 'd serve you here:
Use makes me not so squeamish. In a word,
Since the first hour he went to Chambery,
Of his seven servants, five have I suborned.

Charles. You hate my father?

D'Ormea. Oh, just as you will!
[*Looking at* POLYXENA.

A minute since, I loved him—hate him, now!
What matter?—if you ponder just one thing:
Has he that treaty?—he is setting forward
Already. Are your guards here?

Charles. Well for you
They are not! [*To* POLYXENA]. Him I knew of old, but you—
To hear that pickthank, further his designs! [*To* D'ORMEA.
Guards?—were they here, I'd bid them, for your trouble,
Arrest you.

D'Ormea. Guards you shall not want. I lived
The servant of your choice, not of your need.
You never greatly needed me till now
That you discard me. This is my arrest.
Again I tender you my charge—its duty
Would bid me press you read those documents.
Here, sir! [*Offering his badge of office.*

Charles [*taking it*]. The papers also! Do you think
I dare not read them?

Polyxena. Read them, sir!

Charles. They prove,
My father, still a month within the year
Since he so solemnly consigned it me,
Means to resume his crown? They shall prove that.
Or my best dungeon . . .

D'Ormea. Even say, Chambery!
'T is vacant, I surmise, by this.

Charles. You prove
Your words or pay their forfeit, sir. Go there!
Polyxena, one chance to rend the veil
Thickening and blackening 'twixt us two! Do say,
You 'll see the falsehood of the charges proved!
Do say, at least, you wish to see them proved
False charges—my heart's love of other times!

Polyxena. Ah, Charles!

Charles [*to* D'ORMEA]. Precede me, sir!

D'Ormea. And I'm at length
A martyr for the truth! No end, they say,
Of miracles. My conscious innocence!

[*As they go out, enter—by the middle door, at which he pauses*—VICTOR.

Victor. Sure I heard voices? No. Well, I do best
To make at once for this, the heart o' the place.
The old room! Nothing changed! So near my seat,

D'Ormea? [*Pushing away the stool which is by the* KING'S *chair.*

I want that meeting over first,
I know not why. Tush, he, D'Ormea, slow
To hearten me, the supple knave? That burst
Of spite so eased him! He 'll inform me . . .
What?
Why come I hither? All 's in rough: let all
Remain rough. There 's full time to draw back—nay,
There 's nought to draw back from, as yet; whereas,
If reason should be, to arrest a course
Of error—reason good, to interpose
And save, as I have saved so many times,
Our House, admonish my son's giddy youth,
Relieve him of a weight that proves too much—
Now is the time,—or now, or never.
'Faith,
This kind of step is pitiful, not due
To Charles, this stealing back—hither, because
He 's from his capital! Oh Victor! Victor!
But thus it is. The age of crafty men
Is loathsome; youth contrives to carry off
Dissimulation; we may intersperse
Extenuating passages of strength,
Ardour, vivacity, and wit—may turn
E'en guile into a voluntary grace:

But one's old age, when graces drop away
And leave guile the pure staple of our lives—
Ah, loathsome!

Not so—or why pause I? Turin
Is mine to have, were I so minded, for
The asking; all the army 's mine—I 've witnessed
Each private fight beneath me; all the Court 's
Mine too; and, best of all, D'Ormea 's still
D'Ormea and mine. There 's some grace clinging yet.
Had I decided on this step, ere midnight
I 'd take the crown.

No. Just this step to rise
Exhausts me. Here am I arrived: the rest
Must be done for me. Would I could sit here
And let things right themselves, the masque unmasque
Of the old King, crownless, grey hair and hot blood,—
The young King, crowned, but calm before his time,
They say,—the eager mistress with her taunts,—
And the sad earnest wife who motions me
Away—ay, there she knelt to me! E'en yet
I can return and sleep at Chambery
A dream out.

Rather shake it off at Turin,
King Victor! Say: to Turin—yes, or no?
'T is this relentless noonday-lighted chamber,
Lighted like life but silent as the grave,

That disconcerts me. That 's the change must strike.
No silence last year! Some one flung doors wide
(Those two great doors which scrutinize me now)
And out I went 'mid crowds of men—men talking,
Men watching if my lip fell or brow knit,
Men saw me safe forth, put me on my road:
That makes the misery of this return.
Oh had a battle done it! Had I dropped,
Haling some battle, three entire days old,
Hither and thither by the forehead—dropped
In Spain, in Austria, best of all, in France—
Spurned on its horns or underneath its hooves,
When the spent monster went upon its knees
To pad and pash the prostrate wretch—I, Victor,
Sole to have stood up against France, beat down
By inches, brayed to pieces finally
In some vast unimaginable charge,
A flying hell of horse and foot and guns
Over me, and all 's lost, for ever lost,
There 's no more Victor when the world wakes up!
Then silence, as of a raw battle-field,
Throughout the world. Then after (as whole days
After, you catch at intervals faint noise
Through the stiff crust of frozen blood)—there creeps
A rumour forth, so faint, no noise at all,
That a strange old man, with face outworn for wounds

Is stumbling on from frontier town to town,
Begging a pittance that may help him find
His Turin out; what scorn and laughter follow
The coin you fling into his cap! And last,
Some bright morn, how men crowd about the midst
O' the market-place, where takes the old king breath
Ere with his crutch he strike the palace-gate
Wide ope!

To Turin, yes or no—or no?

Re-enter CHARLES *with papers.*

Charles. Just as I thought! A miserable falsehood
Of hirelings discontented with their pay
And longing for enfranchisement! A few
Testy expressions of old age that thinks
To keep alive its dignity o'er slaves
By means that suit their natures!
[*Tearing them.*] Thus they shake
My faith in Victor!
[*Turning, he discovers* VICTOR.

Victor [*after a pause*]. Not at Evian, Charles?
What 's this? Why do you run to close the doors?
No welcome for your father?

Charles [*aside*]. Not his voice!
What would I give for one imperious tone
Of the old sort! That 's gone for ever.

Victor. Must
I ask once more . . .
Charles. No—I concede it, sir!
You are returned for . . . true, your health declines;
True, Chambery 's a bleak unkindly spot;
You 'd choose one fitter for your final lodge—
Veneria, or Moncaglier—ay, that 's close
And I concede it.
Victor. I received advices
Of the conclusion of the Spanish matter,
Dated from Evian Baths . . .
Charles. And you forbore
To visit me at Evian, satisfied
The work I had to do would fully task
The little wit I have, and that your presence
Would only disconcert me—
Victor. Charles?
Charles. —Me, set
For ever in a foreign course to yours,
And . . .
Sir, this way of wile were good to catch,
But I have not the sleight of it. The truth!
Though I sink under it! What brings you here?
Victor. Not hope of this reception, certainly,
From one who 'd scarce assume a stranger mode
Of speech, did I return to bring about

Some awfulest calamity!

Charles. —You mean,
Did you require your crown again! Oh yes,
I should speak otherwise! But turn not that
To jesting! Sir, the truth! Your health declines?
Is aught deficient in your equipage?
Wisely you seek myself to make complaint,
And foil the malice of the world which laughs
At petty discontents; but I shall care
That not a soul knows of this visit. Speak!

Victor [*aside*]. Here is the grateful much-professing son
Prepared to worship me, for whose sole sake
I think to waive my plans of public good!
[*Aloud.*] Nay, Charles, if I did seek to take once more
My crown, were so disposed to plague myself,
What would be warrant for this bitterness?
I gave it—grant I would resume it—well?

Charles. I should say simply—leaving out the why
And how—you made me swear to keep that crown:
And as you then intended . . .

Victor. Fool! What way
Could I intend or not intend? As man,
With a man's will, when I say "I intend,"
I can intend up to a certain point,
No farther. I intended to preserve

The crown of Savoy and Sardinia whole:
And if events arise demonstrating
The way, I hoped should guard it, rather like
To lose it . . .

Charles. Keep within your sphere and mine!
It is God's province we usurp on, else.
Here, blindfold through the maze of things we walk
By a slight clue of false, true, right and wrong;
All else is rambling and presumption. I
Have sworn to keep this kingdom: there 's my truth.

Victor. Truth, boy, is here, within my breast; and in
Your recognition of it, truth is, too;
And in the effect of all this tortuous dealing
With falsehood, used to carry out the truth,
—In its success, this falsehood turns, again,
Truth for the world. But you are right: these themes
Are over-subtle. I should rather say
In such a case, frankly,—it fails, my scheme:
I hoped to see you bring about, yourself,
What I must bring about. I interpose
On your behalf—with my son's good in sight—
To hold what he is nearly letting go,
Confirm his title, add a grace perhaps.
There 's Sicily, for instance,—granted me
And taken back, some years since: till I give
That island with the rest, my work 's half done.

For his sake, therefore, as of those he rules . . .

Charles. Our sakes are one; and that, you could not say,

Because my answer would present itself
Forthwith:—a year has wrought an age's change.
This people 's not the people now, you once
Could benefit; nor is my policy
Your policy.

Victor [*with an outburst*]. I know it! You undo
All I have done—my life of toil and care!
I left you this the absolutest rule
In Europe: do you think I sit and smile,
Bid you throw power to the populace—
See my Sardinia, that has kept apart,
Join in the mad and democratic whirl
Whereto I see all Europe haste full tide?
England casts off her kings; France mimics England:
This realm I hoped was safe. Yet here I talk,
When I can save it, not by force alone,
But bidding plagues, which follow sons like you,
Fasten upon my disobedient . . .
[*Recollecting himself.*] Surely
I could say this—if minded so—my son?

Charles. You could not. Bitterer curses than your curse
Have I long since denounced upon myself

If I misused my power. In fear of these
I entered on those measures—will abide
By them: so, I should say, Count Tende . . .
Victor. No!
But no! But if, my Charles, your—more than old—
Half-foolish father urged these arguments,
And then confessed them futile, but said plainly
That he forgot his promise, found his strength
Fail him, had thought at savage Chambery
Too much of brilliant Turin, Rivoli here,
And Susa, and Veneria, and Superga—
Pined for the pleasant places he had built
When he was fortunate and young—
Charles. My father!
Victor. Stay yet!—and if he said he could not die
Deprived of baubles he had put aside,
He deemed, for ever—of the Crown that binds
Your brain up, whole, sound and impregnable,
Creating kingliness—the Sceptre too,
Whose mere wind, should you wave it, back would beat
Invaders—and the golden Ball which throbs
As if you grasped the palpitating heart
Indeed o' the realm, to mould as choose you may!
—If I must totter up and down the streets
My sires built, where myself have introduced
And fostered laws and letters, sciences,

The civil and the military arts!
Stay, Charles! I see you letting me pretend
To live my former self once more—King Victor,
The venturous yet politic: they style me
Again, the Father of the Prince: friends wink
Good-humouredly at the delusion you
So sedulously guard from all rough truths
That else would break upon my dotage!—You—
Whom now I see preventing my old shame—
I tell not, point by cruel point, my tale—
For is 't not in your breast my brow is hid?
Is not your hand extended? Say you not . . .

Enter D'ORMEA, *leading in* POLYXENA.

Polyxena [*advancing and withdrawing* CHARLES—*to* VICTOR].

In this conjuncture even, he would say
(Though with a moistened eye and quivering lip)
The suppliant is my father. I must save
A great man from himself, nor see him fling
His well-earned fame away: there must not follow
Ruin so utter, a break-down of worth
So absolute: no enemy shall learn,
He thrust his child 'twixt danger and himself,
And, when that child somehow stood danger out,
Stole back with serpent wiles to ruin Charles

—Body, that 's much,—and soul, that 's more—and realm,
That 's most of all! No enemy shall say . . .

D'Ormea. Do you repent, sir?

Victor [*resuming himself*]. D'Ormea? This is well!
Worthily done, King Charles, craftily done!
Judiciously you post these, to o'erhear
The little your importunate father thrusts
Himself on you to say!—Ah, they 'll correct
The amiable blind facility
You show in answering his peevish suit.
What can he need to sue for? Thanks, D'Ormea!
You have fulfilled your office: but for you,
The old Count might have drawn some few more livres
To swell his income! Had you, lady, missed
The moment, a permission might be granted
To buttress up my ruinous old pile!
But you remember properly the list
Of wise precautions I took when I gave
Nearly as much away—to reap the fruits
I should have looked for!

Charles. Thanks, sir: degrade me,
So you remain yourself! Adieu!

Victor. I 'll not
Forget it for the future, nor presume
Next time to slight such mediators! Nay—
Had I first moved them both to intercede,

I might secure a chamber in Moncaglier
—Who knows?

Charles. Adieu!

Victor. You bid me this adieu
With the old spirit?

Charles. Adieu!

Victor. Charles—Charles!

Charles. Adieu!

[VICTOR *goes.*

Charles. You were mistaken, Marquis, as you hear.
'T was for another purpose the Count came.
The Count desires Moncaglier. Give the order!

D'Ormea [*leisurely*]. Your minister has lost your confidence,
Asserting late, for his own purposes,
Count Tende would . . .

Charles [*flinging his badge back*]. Be still the minister!
And give a loose to your insulting joy;
It irks me more thus stifled than expressed:
Loose it!

D'Ormea. There 's none to loose, alas! I see
I never am to die a martyr.

Polyxena. Charles!

Charles. No praise, at least, Polyxena—no praise!

KING CHARLES.

PART II.

D'ORMEA, *seated, folding papers he has been examining.*

This at the last effects it: now, King Charles
Or else King Victor—that 's a balance: but now,
D'Ormea the arch-culprit, either turn
O' the scale,—that 's sure enough. A point to solve,
My masters, moralists, whate'er your style!
When you discover why I push myself
Into a pitfall you 'd pass safely by,
Impart to me among the rest! No matter.
Prompt are the righteous ever with their rede
To us the wrongful; lesson them this once!
For safe among the wicked are you set,
D'Ormea! We lament life's brevity,
Yet quarter e'en the threescore years and ten,
Nor stick to call the quarter roundly "life."
D'Ormea was wicked, say, some twenty years;
A tree so long was stunted; afterward,
What if it grew, continued growing, till
No fellow of the forest equalled it?

'T was a stump then; a stump it still must be:
While forward saplings, at the outset checked,
In virtue of that first sprout keep their style
Amid the forest's green fraternity.
Thus I shoot up to surely get lopped down
And bound up for the burning. Now for it!

Enter CHARLES *and* POLYXENA *with* Attendants.

D'Ormea [*rises*]. Sir, in the due discharge of this my office—
This enforced summons of yourself from Turin,
And the disclosure I am bound to make
To-night,—there must already be, I feel,
So much that wounds . . .

Charles. Well, sir?

D'Ormea. —That I, perchance,
May utter also what, another time,
Would irk much,—it may prove less irksome now.

Charles. What would you utter?

D'Ormea. That I from my soul
Grieve at to-night's event: for you I grieve,
E'en grieve for . . .

Charles. Tush, another time for talk!
My kingdom is in imminent danger?

D'Ormea. Let
The Count communicate with France—its King,

His grandson, will have Fleury's aid for this,
Though for no other war.

Charles. First for the levies:
What forces can I muster presently?

[D'ORMEA *delivers papers which* CHARLES *inspects.*

Charles. Good—very good. Montorio . . . how is this?
—Equips me double the old complement
Of soldiers?

D'Ormea. Since his land has been relieved
From double imposts, this he manages:
But under the late monarch . . .

Charles. Peace! I know.
Count Spava has omitted mentioning
What proxy is to head these troops of his.

D'Ormea. Count Spava means to head his troops himself.
Something to fight for now; "Whereas," says he,
"Under the sovereign's father" . . .

Charles. It would seem
That all my people love me.

D'Ormea. Yes.

[*To* POLYXENA *while* CHARLES *continues to inspect the papers.*

A temper
Like Victor's may avail to keep a state;

He terrifies men and they fall not off;
Good to restrain: best, if restraint were all.
But, with the silent circle round him, ends
Such sway: our King's begins precisely there.
For to suggest, impel and set at work,
Is quite another function. Men may slight,
In time of peace, the King who brought them peace:
In war,—his voice, his eyes, help more than fear.
They love you, sir!

Charles [*to* Attendants]. Bring the regalia forth!
Quit the room! And now, Marquis, answer me!
Why should the King of France invade my realm?

D'Ormea. Why? Did I not acquaint your Majesty
An hour ago?

Charles. I choose to hear again
What then I heard.

D'Ormea. Because, sir, as I said,
Your father is resolved to have his crown
At any risk; and, as I judge, calls in
The foreigner to aid him.

Charles. And your reason
For saying this?

D'Ormea [*aside*]. Ay, just his father's way!
[*To* CHARLES.] The Count wrote yesterday to your forces'
Chief,
Rhebinder—made demand of help—

Charles. To try
Rhebinder—he 's of alien blood: aught else?
D'Ormea. Receiving a refusal,—some hours after,
The Count called on Del Borgo to deliver
The Act of Abdication: he refusing,
Or hesitating, rather—
Charles. What ensued?
D'Ormea. At midnight, only two hours since, at Turin,
He rode in person to the citadel
With one attendant, to Soccorso gate,
And bade the governor, San Remi, open—
Admit him.
Charles. For a purpose I divine.
These three were faithful, then?
D'Ormea. They told it me.
And I—
Charles. Most faithful—
D'Ormea. Tell it you—with this
Moreover of my own: if, an hour hence,
You have not interposed, the Count will be
O' the road to France for succour.
Charles. Very good!
You do your duty now to me your monarch
Fully, I warrant?—have, that is, your project
For saving both of us disgrace, no doubt?
D'Ormea. I give my counsel,—and the only one.

A month since, I besought you to employ
Restraints which had prevented many a pang:
But now the harsher course must be pursued.
These papers, made for the emergency,
Will pain you to subscribe: this is a list
Of those suspected merely—men to watch;
This—of the few of the Count's very household
You must, however reluctantly, arrest;
While here 's a method of remonstrance—sure
Not stronger than the case demands—to take
With the Count's self.

Charles. Deliver those three papers.

Polyxena [*while* CHARLES *inspects them—to* D'ORMEA].
Your measures are not over-harsh, sir: France
Will hardly be deterred from her intents
By these.

D'Ormea. If who proposes might dispose,
I could soon satisfy you. Even these,
Hear what he 'll say at my presenting!

Charles [*who has signed them*]. There!
About the warrants! You 've my signature.
What turns you pale? I do my duty by you
In acting boldly thus on your advice.

D'Ormea [*reading them separately*]. Arrest the people
I suspected merely?

Charles. Did you suspect them?

D'Ormea. Doubtless: but—but—sir,
This Forquieri 's governor of Turin,
And Rivarol and he have influence over
Half of the capital! Rabella, too?
Why, sir—

Charles. Oh, leave the fear to me!

D'Ormea [*still reading*]. You bid me
Incarcerate the people on this list?
Sir—

Charles. But you never bade arrest those men,
So close related to my father too,
On trifling grounds?

D'Ormea. Oh, as for that, St. George,
President of Chambery's senators,
Is hatching treason! still—
[*More troubled.*] Sir, Count Cumiane
Is brother to your father's wife! What 's here?
Arrest the wife herself?

Charles. You seem to think
A venial crime this plot against me. Well?

D'Ormea [*who has read the last paper*]. Wherefore
am I thus ruined? Why not take
My life at once? This poor formality
Is, let me say, unworthy you! Prevent it
You, madam! I have served you, am prepared
For all disgraces: only, let disgrace

Be plain, be proper—proper for the world
To pass its judgment on 'twixt you and me!
Take back your warrant, I will none of it!
Charles. Here is a man to talk of fickleness!
He stakes his life upon my father's falsehood;
I bid him . . .
D'Ormea. Not you! Were he trebly false,
You do not bid me . . .
Charles. Is 't not written there?
I thought so: give—I 'll set it right.
D'Ormea. Is it there?
Oh yes, and plain—arrest him now—drag here
Your father! And were all six times as plain,
Do you suppose I trust it?
Charles. Just one word!
You bring him, taken in the act of flight,
Or else your life is forfeit.
D'Ormea. Ay, to Turin
I bring him, and to-morrow?
Charles. Here and now!
The whole thing is a lie, a hateful lie,
As I believed and as my father said.
I knew it from the first, but was compelled
To circumvent you; and the great D'Ormea,
That baffled Alberoni and tricked Coscia,
The miserable sower of such discord

'Twixt sire and son, is in the toils at last.
Oh I see! you arrive—this plan of yours,
Weak as it is, torments sufficiently
A sick old peevish man—wrings hasty speech,
An ill-considered threat from him; that 's noted;
Then out you ferret papers, his amusement
In lonely hours of lassitude—examine
The day-by-day report of your paid spies—
And back you come: all was not ripe, you find,
And, as you hope, may keep from ripening yet,
But you were in bare time! Only, 't were best
I never saw my father—these old men
Are potent in excuses: and meanwhile,
D'Ormea 's the man I cannot do without!

Polyxena. Charles—

Charles. Ah, no question! You against me too!
You 'd have me eat and drink and sleep, live, die
With this lie coiled about me, choking me!
No, no, D'Ormea! You venture life, you say,
Upon my father's perfidy: and I
Have, on the whole, no right to disregard
The chains of testimony you thus wind
About me; though I do—do from my soul
Discredit them: still I must authorize
These measures, and I will. Perugia!
[*Many* Officers *enter.*] Count—

You and Solar, with all the force you have,
Stand at the Marquis' orders: what he bids,
Implicitly perform! You are to bring
A traitor here; the man that 's likest one
At present, fronts me; you are at his beck
For a full hour! he undertakes to show
A fouler than himself,—but, failing that,
Return with him, and, as my father lives,
He dies this night! The clemency you blame
So oft, shall be revoked—rights exercised,
Too long abjured.
[*To* D'Ormea.] Now sir, about the work!
To save your king and country! Take the warrant!
D'Ormea. You hear the sovereign's mandate, Count
Perugia?
Obey me! As your diligence, expect
Reward! All follow to Moncaglier!
Charles [*in great anguish*]. D'Ormea! [D'Ormea *goes.*
He goes, lit up with that appalling smile!
[*To* Polyxena, *after a pause.*
At least you understand all this?
Polyxena. These means
Of our defence—these measures of precaution?
Charles. It must be the best way; I should have else
Withered beneath his scorn.
Polyxena. What would you say?

Charles. Why, do you think I mean to keep the crown,
Polyxena?

Polyxena. You then believe the story
In spite of all—that Victor comes?

Charles. Believe it?
I know that he is coming—feel the strength
That has upheld me leave me at his coming!
'T was mine, and now he takes his own again.
Some kinds of strength are well enough to have;
But who 's to have that strength? Let my crown go!
I meant to keep it; but I cannot—cannot!
Only, he shall not taunt me—he, the first . .
See if he would not be the first to taunt me
With having left his kingdom at a word.
With letting it be conquered without stroke,
With . . . no—no—'t is no worse than when he left!
I 've just to bid him take it, and, that over,
We 'll fly away—fly, for I loathe this Turin,
This Rivoli, all titles loathe, all state.
We 'd best go to your country—unless God
Send I die now!

Polyxena. Charles, hear me!

Charles. And again
Shall you be my Polyxena—you 'll take me
Out of this woe! Yes, do speak, and keep speaking!
I would not let you speak just now, for fear

You 'd counsel me against him: but talk, now,
As we two used to talk in blessed times:
Bid me endure all his caprices; take me
From this mad post above him!

Polyxena. I believe
We are undone, but from a different cause.
All your resources, down to the least guard,
Are at D'Ormea's beck. What if, the while,
He act in concert with your father? We
Indeed were lost. This lonely Rivoli—
Where find a better place for them?

Charles [*pacing the room*]. And why
Does Victor come? To undo all that 's done,
Restore the past, prevent the future! Seat
His mistress in your seat, and place in mine
. . . Oh, my own people, whom will you find there,
To ask of, to consult with, to care for,
To hold up with your hands? Whom? One that's false—
False—from the head's crown to the foot's sole, false!
The best is, that I knew it in my heart
From the beginning, and expected this,
And hated you, Polyxena, because
You saw thro' him, though I too saw thro' him,
Saw that he meant this while he crowned me, while
He prayed for me,—nay, while he kissed my brow,
I saw——

Polyxena. But if your measures take effect,
D'Ormea true to you?
Charles. Then worst of all!
I shall have loosed that callous wretch on him!
Well may the woman taunt him with his child—
I, eating here his bread, clothed in his clothes,
Seated upon his seat, let slip D'Ormea
To outrage him! We talk—perchance he tears
My father from his bed; the old hands feel
For one who is not, but who should be there,
He finds D'Ormea! D'Ormea too finds him!
The crowded chamber when the lights go out—
Closed doors—the horrid scuffle in the dark—
The accursed prompting of the minute! My guards!
To horse—and after, with me—and prevent!
Polyxena [*seizing his hand*]. King Charles! Pause
here upon this strip of time
Allotted you out of eternity!
Crowns are from God: you in his name hold yours.
Your life 's no least thing, were it fit your life
Should be abjured along with rule; but now,
Keep both! Your duty is to live and rule—
You, who would vulgarly look fine enough
In the world's eye, deserting your soul's charge,—
Ay, you would have men's praise, this Rivoli
Would be illumined! While, as 't is, no doubt,

Something of stain will ever rest on you;
No one will rightly know why you refused
To abdicate; they 'll talk of deeds you could
Have done, no doubt,—nor do I much expect
Future achievement will blot out the past,
Envelope it in haze—nor shall we two
Live happy any more. 'T will be, I feel,
Only in moments that the duty 's seen
As palpably as now: the months, the years
Of painful indistinctness are to come,
While daily must we tread these palace-rooms
Pregnant with memories of the past: your eye
May turn to mine and find no comfort there,
Through fancies that beset me, as yourself,
Of other courses, with far other issues,
We might have taken this great night: such bear,
As I will bear! What matters happiness?
Duty! There 's man's one moment: this is yours!

[*Putting the crown on his head, and the sceptre in his hand, she places him on his seat: a long pause and silence.*

Enter D'ORMEA *and* VICTOR, *with* Guards.

Victor. At last I speak; but once—that once, to you!
'T is you I ask, not these your varletry,
Who 's King of us?

Charles [*from his seat.*] Count Tende . . .
Victor. What your spies
Assert I ponder in my soul, I say—
Here to your face, amid your guards! I choose
To take again the crown whose shadow I gave—
For still its potency surrounds the weak
White locks their felon hands have discomposed.
Or I 'll not ask who 's King, but simply, who
Withholds the crown I claim? Deliver it!
I have no friend in the wide world: nor France
Nor England cares for me: you see the sum
Of what I can avail. Deliver it!
Charles. Take it, my father!
And now say in turn,
Was it done well, my father—sure not well,
To try me thus! I might have seen much cause
For keeping it—too easily seen cause!
But, from that moment, e'en more woefully
My life had pined away, than pine it will.
Already you have much to answer for.
My life to pine is nothing,—her sunk eyes
Were happy once! No doubt, my people think
I am their King still . . . but I cannot strive!
Take it!
Victor [*one hand on the crown* CHARLES *offers, the other on his neck*]. So few years give it quietly,

My son! It will drop from me. See you not?
A crown 's unlike a sword to give away—
That, let a strong hand to a weak hand give!
But crowns should slip from palsied brows to heads
Young as this head: yet mine is weak enough,
E'en weaker than I knew. I seek for phrases
To vindicate my right. 'T is of a piece!
All is alike gone by with me—who beat
Once D'Orleans in his lines—his very lines!
To have been Eugene's comrade, Louis's rival,
And now . . .

Charles [*putting the crown on him, to the rest*]. The King speaks, yet none kneels, I think!

Victor. I am then King! As I became a King
Despite the nations, kept myself a King,
So I die King, with Kingship dying too
Around me. I have lasted Europe's time.
What wants my story of completion? Where
Must needs the damning break show? Who mistrusts
My children here—tell they of any break
'Twixt my day's sunrise and its fiery fall?
And who were by me when I died but they?
D'Ormea there!

Charles. What means he?

Victor. Ever there!
Charles—how to save your story! Mine must go.

Say—say that you refused the crown to me!
Charles, yours shall be my story! You immured
Me, say, at Rivoli. A single year
I spend without a sight of you, then die.
That will serve every purpose—tell that tale
The world!

Charles. Mistrust me? Help!

Victor. Past help, past reach!
'T is in the heart—you cannot reach the heart:
This broke mine, that I did believe, you, Charles,
Would have denied me and disgraced me.

Polyxena. Charles
Has never ceased to be your subject, sir!
He reigned at first through setting up yourself
As pattern: if he e'er seemed harsh to you,
'T was from a too intense appreciation
Of your own character: he acted you—
Ne'er for an instant did I think it real,
Nor look for any other than this end.
I hold him worlds the worse on that account;
But so it was.

Charles [*to* POLYXENA]. I love you now indeed.
[*To* VICTOR.] You never knew me.

Victor. Hardly till this moment,
When I seem learning many other things
Because the time for using them is past.

If 't were to do again! That 's idly wished.
Truthfulness might prove policy as good
As guile. Is this my daughter's forehead? Yes:
I 've made it fitter now to be a queen's
Than formerly: I 've ploughed the deep lines there
Which keep too well a crown from slipping off.
No matter. Guile has made me King again.
Louis—'t was in King Victor's time:—long since,
When Louis reigned and, also, Victor reigned.
How the world talks already of us two!
God of eclipse and each discoloured star,
Why do I linger then?
Ha! Where lurks he?
D'Ormea! Nearer to your King! Now stand!
[*Collecting his strength as* D'Ormea *approaches.*
You lied, D'Ormea! I do not repent. [*Dies.*

THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES

A TRAGEDY

PERSONS.

The Grand-Master's Prefect.
The Patriarch's Nuncio.
The Republic's Admiral.
LOYS DE DREUX, *Knight-Novice.*
Initiated Druses—DJABAL, KHALIL, ANAEL, MAANI, KARSHOOK, RAGHIB, AYOOB, *and others.*
Uninitiated Druses.
Prefect's Guard. Nuncio's Attendants. Admiral's Force.

TIME, 14—

PLACE.—*An Islet of the Southern Sporades, colonized by Druses of Lebanon, and garrisoned by the Knights-Hospitallers of Rhodes.*

SCENE.—*A Hall in the Prefect's Palace.*

THE

RETURN OF THE DRUSES.

1843.

ACT I.

Enter stealthily KARSHOOK, RAGHIB, AYOOB *and other initiated* Druses, *each as he enters casting off a robe that conceals his distinctive black vest and white turban; then, as giving a loose to exultation,—*

Karshook. The moon is carried off in purple fire:
Day breaks at last! Break glory, with the day,
On Djabal's dread incarnate mystery
Now ready to resume its pristine shape
Of Hakeem, as the Khalif vanished erst
In what seemed death to uninstructed eyes,
On red Mokattam's verge—our Founder's flesh,
As he resumes our Founder's function!
Raghib. —Death
Sweep to the Christian Prefect that enslaved
So long us sad Druse exiles o'er the sea!

Ayoob. Most joy be thine, O Mother-mount! Thy brood
Returns to thee, no outcasts as we left,
But thus—but thus! Behind, our Prefect's corse;
Before, a presence like the morning—thine,
Absolute Djabal late,—God Hakeem now
That day breaks!

Karshook. Off then, with disguise at last!
As from our forms this hateful garb we strip,
Lose every tongue its glozing accent too,
Discard each limb the ignoble gesture! Cry,
'T is the Druse Nation, warders on our Mount
Of the world's secret, since the birth of time,
—No kindred slips, no offsets from thy stock,
No spawn of Christians are we, Prefect, we
Who rise . . .

Ayoob. Who shout . .

Raghib. Who seize, a first-fruits, ha—
Spoil of the spoiler! Brave!

[*They begin to tear down, and to dispute for, the decorations of the hall.*

Karshook. Hold!

Ayoob. —Mine, I say;
And mine shall it continue!

Karshook. Just this fringe!
Take anything beside! Lo, spire on spire,

Curl serpentwise wreathed columns to the top
O' the roof, and hide themselves mysteriously
Among the twinkling lights and darks that haunt
Yon cornice! Where the huge veil, they suspend
Before the Prefect's chamber of delight,
Floats wide, then falls again as if its slave,
The scented air, took heart now, and anon
Lost heart to buoy its breadths of gorgeousness
Above the gloom they droop in—all the porch
Is jewelled o'er with frostwork charactery;
And, see, yon eight-point cross of white flame, winking
Hoar-silvery like some fresh-broke marble stone:
Raze out the Rhodian cross there, so thou leav'st me
This single fringe!

Ayoob. Ha, wouldst thou, dog-fox? Help!
—Three hand-breadths of gold fringe, my son was set
To twist, the night he died!

Karshook. Nay, hear the knave!
And I could witness my one daughter borne,
A week since, to the Prefect's couch, yet fold
These arms, be mute, lest word of mine should mar
Our Master's work, delay the Prefect here
A day, prevent his sailing hence for Rhodes—
How know I else?—Hear me denied my right
By such a knave!

Raghib [*interposing*]. Each ravage for himself!

Booty enough! On, Druses! Be there found
Blood and a heap behind us; with us, Djabal
Turned Hakeem; and before us, Lebanon!
Yields the porch? Spare not! There his minions dragged
Thy daughter, Karshook, to the Prefect's couch!
Ayoob! Thy son, to soothe the Prefect's pride,
Bent o'er that task, the death-sweat on his brow,
Carving the spice-tree's heart in scroll-work there!
Onward in Djabal's name!

As the tumult is at height, enter KHALIL. *A pause and silence.*

Khalil. Was it for this,
Djabal hath summoned you? Deserve you thus
A portion in to-day's event? What, here—
When most behoves your feet fall soft, your eyes
Sink low, your tongues lie still,—at Djabal's side,
Close in his very hearing, who, perchance,
Assumes e'en now God Hakeem's dreaded shape,—
Dispute you for these gauds?

Ayoob. How say'st thou, Khalil?
Doubtless our Master prompts thee! Take the fringe,
Old Karshook! I supposed it was a day . . .

Khalil. For pillage?

Karshook. Hearken, Khalil! Never spoke
A boy so like a song-bird; we avouch thee
Prettiest of all our Master's instruments

Except thy bright twin-sister; thou and Anael
Challenge his prime regard: but we may crave
(Such nothings as we be) a portion too
Of Djabal's favour; in him we believed,
His bound ourselves, him moon by moon obeyed,
Kept silence till this daybreak—so, may claim
Reward: who grudges me my claim?
Ayoob. To-day
Is not as yesterday!
Raghib. Stand off!
Khalil. Rebel you?
Must I, the delegate of Djabal, draw
His wrath on you, the day of our Return?
Other Druses. Wrench from their grasp the fringe!
Hounds! must the earth
Vomit her plagues on us thro' thee?—and thee?
Plague me not, Khalil, for their fault!
Khalil. Oh, shame!
Thus breaks to-day on you, the mystic tribe
Who, flying the approach of Osman, bore
Our faith, a merest spark, from Syria's ridge
Its birthplace, hither! "Let the sea divide
"These hunters from their prey," you said; "and safe
"In this dim islet's virgin solitude
'Tend we our faith, the spark, till happier time
"Fan it to fire; till Hakeem rise again,

"According to his word that, in the flesh
"Which faded on Mokattam ages since,
"He, at our extreme need, would interpose,
"And, reinstating all in power and bliss,
"Lead us himself to Lebanon once more."
Was 't not thus you departed years ago,
Ere I was born?

Druses. 'T was even thus, years ago.

Khalil. And did you call—(according to old laws
Which bid us, lest the sacred grow profane,
Assimilate ourselves in outward rites
With strangers fortune makes our lords, and live
As Christian with the Christian, Jew with Jew,
Druse only with the Druses)—did you call
Or no, to stand 'twixt you and Osman's rage
(Mad to pursue e'en hither thro' the sea
The remnant of our tribe), a race self-vowed
To endless warfare with his hordes and him,
The White-cross Knights of the adjacent Isle?

Karshook. And why else rend we down, wrench up, rase out?

These Knights of Rhodes we thus solicited
For help, bestowed on us a fiercer pest
Than aught we fled—their Prefect; who began
His promised mere paternal governance
By a prompt massacre of all our Sheikhs

Able to thwart the Order in its scheme
Of crushing, with our nation's memory,
Each chance of our return, and taming us
Bondslaves to Rhodes for ever—all, he thinks
To end by this day's treason.

Khalil. Say I not?
You, fitted to the Order's purposes,
Your Sheikhs cut off, your rites, your garb proscribed,
Must yet receive one degradation more;
The Knights at last throw off the mask—transfer,
As tributary now and appanage,
This islet they are but protectors of,
To their own ever-craving liege, the Church,
Who licenses all crimes that pay her thus.
You, from their Prefect, were to be consigned
(Pursuant of I know not what vile pact)
To the Knights' Patriarch, ardent to outvie
His predecessor in all wickedness.
When suddenly rose Djabal in the midst,
Djabal, the man in semblance, but our God
Confessed by signs and portents. Ye saw fire
Bicker round Djabal, heard strange music flit
Bird-like about his brow?

Druses. We saw—we heard!
Djabal is Hakeem, the incarnate Dread,
The phantasm Khalif. King of Prodigies!

Khalil. And as he said has not our Khalif done,
And so disposed events (from land to land
Passing invisibly) that when, this morn,
The pact of villany complete, there comes
This Patriarch's Nuncio with this Master's Prefect
Their treason to consummate,—each will face
For a crouching handful, an uplifted nation:
For simulated Christians, confessed Druses:
And, for slaves past hope of the Mother-mount,
Freedmen returning there 'neath Venice' flag;
That Venice which, the Hospitallers' foe,
Grants us from Candia escort home at price
Of our relinquished isle, Rhodes counts her own—
Venice, whose promised argosies should stand
Toward harbour: is it now that you, and you,
And you, selected from the rest to bear
The burthen of the Khalif's secret, further
To-day's event, entitled by your wrongs,
And witness in the Prefect's hall his fate—
That you dare clutch these gauds? Ay, drop them!

Karshook. True,
Most true, all this; and yet, may one dare hint,
Thou art the youngest of us?—though employed
Abundantly as Djabal's confidant,
Transmitter of his mandates, even now.
Much less, whene'er beside him Anael graces

The cedar throne, his queen-bride, art thou like
To occupy its lowest step that day!
Now, Khalil, wert thou checked as thou aspirest,
Forbidden such or such an honour,—say,
Would silence serve so amply?

Khalil. Karshook thinks
I covet honours? Well, nor idly thinks.
Honours? I have demanded of them all
The greatest.

Karshook. I supposed so.

Khalil. Judge, yourselves!
Turn, thus: 't is in the alcove at the back
Of yonder columned porch, whose entrance now
The veil hides, that our Prefect holds his state,
Receives the Nuncio, when the one, from Rhodes,
The other lands from Syria; there they meet.
Now, I have sued with earnest prayers . . .

Karshook. For what
Shall the Bride's brother vainly sue?

Khalil. That mine—
Avenging in one blow a myriad wrongs
—Might be the hand to slay the Prefect there!
Djabal reserves that office for himself. [*A silence.*
Thus far, as youngest of you all, I speak
—Scarce more enlightened than yourselves; since, near
As I approach him, nearer as I trust

Soon to approach our Master, he reveals
Only the God's power, not the glory yet.
Therefore I reasoned with you: now, as servant
To Djabal, bearing his authority,
Hear me appoint your several posts! Till noon
None see him save myself and Anael: once
The deed achieved, our Khalif, casting off
The embodied Awe's tremendous mystery,
The weakness of the flesh disguise, resumes
His proper glory, ne'er to fade again.

Enter a Druse.

The Druse. Our Prefect lands from Rhodes!—without a sign
That he suspects aught since he left our Isle;
Nor in his train a single guard beyond
The few he sailed with hence: so have we learned
From Loys.

Karshook. Loys? Is not Loys gone
For ever?

Ayoob. Loys, the Frank Knight, returned?

The Druse. Loys, the boy, stood on the leading prow
Conspicuous in his gay attire, and leapt
Into the surf the foremost. Since day-dawn
I kept watch to the Northward; take but note
Of my poor vigilance to Djabal!

Khalil. Peace!
Thou, Karshook, with thy company, receive
The Prefect as appointed: see, all keep
The wonted show of servitude: announce
His entry here by the accustomed peal
Of trumpets, then await the further pleasure
Of Djabal! (Loys back, whom Djabal sent
To Rhodes that we might spare the single Knight
Worth sparing!)

Enter a second Druse.

The Druse. I espied it first! Say, I
First spied the Nuncio's galley from the South!
Said'st thou a Crossed-keys' flag would flap the mast?
It nears apace! One galley and no more.
If Djabal chance to ask who spied the flag,
Forget not, I it was!

Khalil. Thou, Ayoob, bring
The Nuncio and his followers hither! Break
One rule prescribed, ye wither in your blood,
Die at your fault!

Enter a third Druse.

The Druse. I shall see home, see home!
—Shall banquet in the sombre groves again!
Hail to thee, Khalil! Venice looms afar;

The argosies of Venice, like a cloud,
Bear up from Candia in the distance!
Khalil. Joy!
Summon our people, Raghib! Bid all forth!
Tell them the long-kept secret, old and young!
Set free the captive, let the trampled raise
Their faces from the dust, because at length
The cycle is complete, God Hakeem's reign
Begins anew! Say, Venice for our guard,
Ere night we steer for Syria! Hear you, Druses?
Hear you this crowning witness to the claims
Of Djabal? Oh, I spoke of hope and fear,
Reward and punishment, because he bade
Who has the right; for me, what should I say
But, mar not those imperial lineaments,
No majesty of all that rapt regard
Vex by the least omission! Let him rise
Without a check from you!
Druses. Let Djabal rise!

Enter Loys.—*The* Druses *are silent.*

Loys. Who speaks of Djabal?—for I seek him, friends!
[*Aside.*] *Tu Dieu!* 'T is as our Isle broke out in song
For joy, its Prefect-incubus drops off
To-day, and I succeed him in his rule!
But no—they cannot dream of their good fortune!

[*Aloud.*] Peace to you, Druses! I have tidings for you
But first for Djabal: where 's your tall bewitcher,
With that small Arab thin-lipped silver-mouth?
Khalil [*aside to* KARSHOOK]. Loys, in truth! Yet
Djabal cannot err!
Karshook [*to* KHALIL]. And who takes charge of
Loys? That 's forgotten,
Despite thy wariness! Will Loys stand
And see his comrades slaughtered?
Loys [*aside*]. How they shrink
And whisper, with those rapid faces! What?
The sight of me in their oppressors' garb
Strikes terror to the simple tribe? God's shame
On those that bring our Order ill repute!
But all 's at end now; better days begin
For these mild mountaineers from over-sea:
The timidest shall have in me no Prefect
To cower at thus! [*Aloud.*] I asked for Djabal—
Karshook [*aside*]. Better
One lured him, ere he can suspect, inside
The corridor; 't were easy to despatch
A youngster. [*To* LOYS.] Djabal passed some minutes
since
Thro' yonder porch, and . .
Khalil [*aside*]. Hold! What, him despatch?
The only Christian of them all we charge

No tyranny upon? Who,—noblest Knight
Of all that learned from time to time their trade
Of lust and cruelty among us,—heir
To Europe's pomp, a truest child of pride,—
Yet stood between the Prefect and ourselves
From the beginning? Loys, Djabal makes
Account of, and precisely sent to Rhodes
For safety? I take charge of him!
[*To* Loys.] Sir Loys,—

Loys. There, cousins! Does Sir Loys strike you dead?

Khalil [*advancing*]. Djabal has intercourse with few or none
Till noontide: but, your pleasure?

Loys. "Intercourse
"With few or none?"—(Ah, Khalil, when you spoke
I saw not your smooth face! All health!—and health
To Anael! How fares Anael?)—"Intercourse
"With few or none?" Forget you, I 've been friendly
With Djabal long ere you or any Druse?
—Enough of him at Rennes, I think, beneath
The Duke my father's roof! He 'd tell by the hour,
With fixed white eyes beneath his swarthy brow,
Plausiblest stories . . .

Khalil. Stories, say you?—Ah,
The quaint attire!

Loys. My dress for the last time!

How sad I cannot make you understand,
This ermine, o'er a shield, betokens me
Of Bretagne, ancientest of provinces
And noblest; and, what 's best and oldest there,
See, Dreux', our house's blazon, which the Nuncio
Tacks to an Hospitaller's vest to-day!

Khalil. The Nuncio we await? What brings you back
From Rhodes, Sir Loys?

Loys. How you island-tribe
Forget the world 's awake while here you drowse!
What brings me back? What should not bring me, rather!
Our Patriarch's Nuncio visits you to-day—
Is not my year's probation out? I come
To take the knightly vows.

Khalil. What 's that you wear?

Loys. This Rhodian cross? The cross your Prefect wore.
You should have seen, as I saw, the full Chapter
Rise, to a man, while they transferred this cross
From that unworthy Prefect's neck to . . . (fool—
My secret will escape me!) In a word,
My year's probation passed, a Knight ere eve
Am I; bound, like the rest, to yield my wealth
To the common stock, to live in chastity,
(We Knights espouse alone our Order's fame)

—Change this gay weed for the back white-crossed gown,
And fight to death against the Infidel
—Not, therefore, against you, you Christians with
Such partial difference only as befits
The peacefullest of tribes. But Khalil, prithee,
Is not the Isle brighter than wont to-day?

Khalil. Ah, the new sword!

Loys. See now! You handle sword
As 't were a camel-staff. Pull! That 's my motto,
Annealed "*Pro fide*," on the blade in blue.

Khalil. No curve in it? Surely a blade should curve.

Loys. Straight from the wrist! Loose—it should poise itself!

Khalil [*waving with irrepressible exultation the sword*].
We are a nation, Loys, of old fame
Among the mountains! Rights have we to keep
With the sword too!
[*Remembering himself.*] But I forget—you bid me
Seek Djabal?

Loys. What! A sword's sight scares you not?
(The People I will make of him and them!
Oh let my Prefect-sway begin at once!)
Bring Djabal—say, indeed, that come he must!

Khalil. At noon seek Djabal in the Prefect's Chamber,
And find . . . [*Aside.*] Nay, 't is thy cursed race's token,
Frank pride, no special insolence of thine!

[*Aloud.*] Tarry, and I will do your bidding, Loys!
[*To the rest aside.*] Now, forth you! I proceed to
Djabal straight.
Leave this poor boy, who knows not what he says!
Oh will it not add joy to even thy joy,
Djabal, that I report all friends were true?
[KHALIL *goes,* *followed by the* Druses.
Loys. Tu Dieu! How happy I shall make these
Druses!
Was 't not surpassingly contrived of me
To get the long list of their wrongs by heart,
Then take the first pretence for stealing off
From these poor islanders, present myself
Sudden at Rhodes before the noble Chapter,
And (as best proof of ardour in its cause
Which ere to-night will have become, too, mine)
Acquaint it with this plague-sore in its body,
This Prefect and his villanous career?
The princely Synod! All I dared request
Was his dismissal; and they graciously
Consigned his very office to myself—
Myself may cure the Isle diseased!
And well
For them, they did so! Since I never felt
How lone a lot, tho' brilliant, I embrace,
Till now that, past retrieval, it is mine.

To live thus, and thus die! Yet, as I leapt
On shore, so home a feeling greeted me
That I could half believe in Djabal's story,
He used to tempt my father with, at Rennes—
And me, too, since the story brought me here—
Of some Count Dreux and ancestor of ours
Who, sick of wandering from Bouillon's war,
Left his old name in Lebanon.
Long days
At least to spend in the Isle! and, my news known
An hour hence, what if Anael turn on me
The great black eyes I must forget?
Why, fool,
Recall them, then? My business is with Djabal,
Not Anael! Djabal tarries: if I seek him?—
The Isle is brighter than its wont to-day.

ACT II.

Enter DJABAL.

Djabal. That a strong man should think himself a God!
I—Hakeem? To have wandered through the world,
Sown falsehood, and thence reaped now scorn, now faith,
For my one chant with many a change, my tale
Of outrage, and my prayer for vengeance—this
Required, forsooth, no mere man's faculty,
Nought less than Hakeem's? The persuading Loys
To pass probation here; the getting access
By Loys to the Prefect; worst of all,
The gaining my tribe's confidence by fraud
That would disgrace the very Frank,—a few
Of Europe's secrets which subdue the flame,
The wave,—to ply a simple tribe with these,
Took Hakeem?
And I feel this first to-day!
Does the day break, is the hour imminent
When one deed, when my whole life's deed, my deed

Must be accomplished? Hakeem? Why the God?
Shout, rather, "Djabal, Youssof's child, thought slain
"With his whole race, the Druses' Sheikhs, this Prefect
"Endeavoured to extirpate—saved, a child,
"Returns from traversing the world, a man,
"Able to take revenge, lead back the march
"To Lebanon"—so shout, and who gainsays?
But now, because delusion mixed itself
Insensibly with this career, all 's changed!
Have I brought Venice to afford us convoy?
"True—but my jugglings wrought that!" Put I heart
Into our people where no heart lurked?—"Ah,
"What cannot an impostor do!"
Not this!
Not do this which I do! Not bid avaunt
Falsehood! Thou shalt not keep thy hold on me!
—Nor even get a hold on me! 'T is now—
This day—hour—minute—'t is as here I stand
On the accursed threshold of the Prefect,
That I am found deceiving and deceived!
And now what do I?—hasten to the few
Deceived, ere they deceive the many—shout,
"As I professed, I did believe myself!
"Say, Druses, had you seen a butchery—
"If Ayoob, Karshook saw——Maani there
"Must tell you how I saw my father sink;

" My mother's arms twine still about my neck;
" I hear my brother shriek, here 's yet the scar
" Of what was meant for my own death-blow—say,
" If you had woke like me, grown year by year
" Out of the tumult in a far-off clime,
" Would it be wondrous such delusion grew?
" I walked the world, asked help at every hand;
" Came help or no? Not this and this? Which helps
" When I returned with, found the Prefect here,
" The Druses here, all here but Hakeem's self,
" The Khalif of the thousand prophecies,
" Reserved for such a juncture,—could I call
" My mission aught but Hakeem's? Promised Hakeem
" More than performs the Djabal—you absolve?
" —Me, you will never shame before the crowd
" Yet happily ignorant?—Me, both throngs surround,
" The few deceived, the many unabused,
" —Who, thus surrounded, slay for you and them
" The Prefect, lead to Lebanon? No Khalif,
" But Sheikh once more! Mere Djabal—not" . . .

Enter KHALIL *hastily.*

Khalil. —God Hakeem!
'T is told! The whole Druse nation knows thee, Hakeem,
As we! and mothers lift on high their babes
Who seem aware, so glisten their great eyes,

Thou hast not failed us; ancient brows are proud;
Our elders could not earlier die, it seems,
Than at thy coming! The Druse heart is thine!
Take it! my lord and theirs, be thou adored!
Djabal [*aside*]. Adored!—but I renounce it utterly!
Khalil. Already are they instituting choirs
And dances to the Khalif, as of old
'T is chronicled thou bad'st them.
Djabal [*aside*]. I abjure it!
'T is not mine—not for me!
Khalil. Why pour they wine
Flavoured like honey and bruised mountain-herbs,
Or wear those strings of sun-dried cedar-fruit?
Oh, let me tell thee—Esaad, we supposed
Doting, is carried forth, eager to see
The last sun rise on the Isle: he can see now!
The shamed Druse women never wept before:
They can look up when we reach home, they say.
Smell!—sweet cane, saved in Lilith's breast thus long—
Sweet!—it grows wild in Lebanon. And I
Alone do nothing for thee! 'T is my office
Just to announce what well thou know'st—but thus
Thou bidst me. At this self-same moment tend
The Prefect, Nuncio and the Admiral
Hither by their three sea-paths: nor forget

Who were the trusty watchers!—thou forget?
Like me, who do forget that Anael bade . . .
Djabal [*aside*]. Ay, Anael, Anael—is that said at last?
Louder than all, that would be said, I knew!
What does abjuring mean, confessing mean,
To the people? Till that woman crossed my path,
On went I, solely for my people's sake:
I saw her, and I then first saw myself,
And slackened pace: "if I should prove indeed
"Hakeem—with Anael by!"
Khalil [*aside*]. Ah, he is rapt!
Dare I at such a moment break on him
Even to do my sister's bidding? Yes:
The eyes are Djabal's and not Hakeem's yet,
Though but till I have spoken this, perchance.
Djabal [*aside*]. To yearn to tell her, and yet have no one
Great heart's word that will tell her! I could gasp
Doubtless one such word out, and die.
[*Aloud.*] You said
That Anael . . .
Khalil. . . . Fain would see thee, speak with thee,
Before thou change, discard this Djabal's shape
She knows, for Hakeem's shape she is to know.
Something to say that will not from her mind!
I know not what—"Let him but come!" she said.

Djabal [*half-apart*]. My nation—all my Druses—
how fare they?
Those I must save, and suffer thus to save,
Hold they their posts? Wait they their Khalif too?
Khalil. All at the signal pant to flock around
That banner of a brow!
Djabal [*aside*]. And when they flock,
Confess them this: and after, for reward,
Be chased with howlings to her feet perchance!
—Have the poor outraged Druses, deaf and blind,
Precede me there, forestall my story there,
Tell it in mocks and jeers!
I lose myself.
Who needs a Hakeem to direct him now?
I need the veriest child—why not this child?
[*Turning abruptly to* KHALIL.
You are a Druse too, Khalil; you were nourished
Like Anael with our mysteries: if she
Could vow, so nourished, to love only one
Who should avenge the Druses, whence proceeds
Your silence? Wherefore made you no essay,
Who thus implicitly can execute
My bidding? What have I done, you could not?
Who, knowing more than Anael the prostration
Of our once lofty tribe, the daily life
Of this detested . . .

Does he come, you say,
This Prefect? All 's in readiness?
Khalil. The sword,
The sacred robe, the Khalif's mystic tiar,
Laid up so long, are all disposed beside
The Prefect's chamber.
Djabal. —Why did you despair?
Khalil. I know our nation's state? Too surely know,
As thou who speak'st to prove me! Wrongs like ours
Should wake revenge: but when I sought the wronged
And spoke,—"The Prefect stabbed your son—arise!
"Your daughter, while you starve, eats shameless bread
"In his pavilion—then arise!"—my speech
Fell idly: 't was, "Be silent, or worse fare!
"Endure till time's slow cycle prove complete!
"Who mayst thou be that takest on thee to thrust
"Into this peril—art thou Hakeem?" No!
Only a mission like thy mission renders
All these obedient at a breath, subdues
Their private passions, brings their wills to one.
Djabal. You think so?
Khalil. Even now—when they have witnessed
Thy miracles—had I not threatened all
With Hakeem's vengeance, they would mar the work,
And couch ere this, each with his special prize,
Safe in his dwelling, leaving our main hope

To perish. No! When these have kissed thy feet
At Lebanon, the past purged off, the present
Clear,—for the future, even Hakeem's mission
May end, and I perchance, or any youth,
Shall rule them thus renewed.—I tutor thee!

Djabal. And wisely. (He is Anael's brother, pure
As Anael's self.) Go say, I come to her.
Haste! I will follow you. [KHALIL *goes.*
Oh, not confess
To these, the blinded multitude—confess,
Before at least the fortune of my deed
Half-authorize its means! Only to her
Let me confess my fault, who in my path
Curled up like incense from a Mage-king's tomb
When he would have the wayfarer descend
Through the earth's rift and bear hid treasure forth!
How should child's-carelessness prove manhood's crime
Till now that I, whose lone youth hurried past,
Letting each joy 'scape for the Druses' sake,
At length recover in one Druse all joy?
Were her brow brighter, her eyes richer, still
Would I confess. On the gulf's verge I pause.
How could I slay the Prefect, thus and thus?
Anael, be mine to guard me, not destroy! [*Goes.*

Enter ANAEL, *and* MAANI *who is assisting to array her in the ancient dress of the Druses.*

Anael. Those saffron vestures of the tabret-girls!
Comes Djabal, think you?

Maani. Doubtless Djabal comes.

Anael. Dost thou snow-swathe thee kinglier, Lebanon,
Than in my dreams?—Nay all the tresses off
My forehead! Look I lovely so? He says
That I am lovely.

Maani. Lovely: nay, that hangs
Awry.

Anael. You tell me how a khandjar hangs?
The sharp side, thus, along the heart, see, marks
The maiden of our class. Are you content
For Djabal as for me?

Maani. Content, my child.

Anael. Oh mother, tell me more of him! He comes
Even now—tell more, fill up my soul with him!

Maani. And did I not . . . yes, surely . . . tell you all?

Anael. What will be changed in Djabal when the Change
Arrives? Which feature? Not his eyes!

Maani. 'T is writ
Our Hakeem's eyes rolled fire and clove the dark
Superbly.

Anael. Not his eyes! His voice perhaps?
Yet that 's no change; for a grave current lived
—Grandly beneath the surface ever lived,
That, scattering, broke as in live silver spray
While . . ah, the bliss . . he would discourse to me
In that enforced still fashion, word on word!
'T is the old current which must swell thro' that,
For what least tone, Maani, could I lose?
'T is surely not his voice will change!
—If Hakeem
Only stood by! If Djabal, somehow, passed
Out of the radiance as from out a robe;
Possessed, but was not it!
He lived with you?
Well—and that morning Djabal saw me first
And heard me vow never to wed but one
Who saved my People—on that day . . . proceed!

Maani. Once more, then: from the time of his return
In secret, changed so since he left the Isle
That I, who screened our Emir's last of sons,
This Djabal, from the Prefect's massacre
—Who bade him ne'er forget the child he was,
—Who dreamed so long the youth he might become—
I knew not in the man that child; the man
Who spoke alone of hope to save our tribe,

How he had gone from land to land to save
Our tribe—allies were sure, nor foes to dread.
And much he mused, days, nights, alone he mused:
But never till that day when, pale and worn
As by a persevering woe, he cried
"Is there not one Druse left me?"—and I showed
The way to Khalil's and your hiding-place
From the abhorred eye of the Prefect here,
So that he saw you, heard you speak—till then,
Never did he announce—(how the moon seemed
To ope and shut, the while, above us both!)
—His mission was the mission promised us;
The cycle had revolved; all things renewing,
He was lost Hakeem clothed in flesh to lead
His children home anon, now veiled to work
Great purposes: the Druses now would change!

Anael. And they have changed! And obstacles did sink,
And furtherances rose! And round his form
Played fire, and music beat her angel wings!
My people, let me more rejoice, oh more
For you than for myself! Did I but watch
Afar the pageant, feel our Khalif pass,
One of the throng, how proud were I—tho' ne'er
Singled by Djabal's glance! But to be chosen
His own from all, the most his own of all,

To be exalted with him, side by side,
Lead the exulting Druses, meet . . . ah, how
Worthily meet the maidens who await
Ever beneath the cedars—how deserve
This honour, in their eyes? So bright are they
Who saffron-vested sound the tabret there,
The girls who throng there in my dream! One hour
And all is over: how shall I do aught
That may deserve next hour's exalting?—How?—
[*Suddenly to* MAANI.
Mother, I am not worthy him! I read it
Still in his eyes! He stands as if to tell me
I am not, yet forbears. Why else revert
To one theme ever?—how mere human gifts
Suffice him in myself—whose worship fades,
Whose awe goes ever off at his approach,
As now, who when he comes . . .
[DJABAL *enters.*] Oh why is it
I cannot kneel to you?

Djabal. Rather, 't is I
Should kneel to you, my Anael!

Anael. Even so!
For never seem you—shall I speak the truth?—
Never a God to me! 'T is the Man's hand,
Eye, voice! Oh do you veil these to our people,
Or but to me? To them, I think, to them!

And brightness is their veil, shadow—my truth!
You mean that I should never kneel to you
—So, thus I kneel!

Djabal [*preventing her*]. No—no!

[*Feeling the khandjar as he raises her.*

Ha, have you chosen . . .

Anael. The khandjar with our ancient garb. But, Djabal,
Change not, be not exalted yet! Give time
That I may plan more, perfect more! My blood
Beats, beats!

[*Aside.*] Oh must I then—since Loys leaves us
Never to come again, renew in me
These doubts so near effaced already—must
I needs confess them now to Djabal?—own
That when I saw that stranger, heard his voice,
My faith fell, and the woeful thought flashed first
That each effect of Djabal's presence, taken
For proof of more than human attributes
In him, by me whose heart at his approach
Beat fast, whose brain while he was by swam round,
Whose soul at his departure died away,
—That every such effect might have been wrought
In other frames, tho' not in mine, by Loys
Or any merely mortal presence? Doubt
Is fading fast; shall I reveal it now?

How shall I meet the rapture presently,
With doubt unexpiated, undisclosed?

Djabal [*aside*]. Avow the truth? I cannot! In what words
Avow that all she loved in me was false?
—Which yet has served that flower-like love of hers
To climb by, like the clinging gourd, and clasp
With its divinest wealth of leaf and bloom.
Could I take down the prop-work, in itself
So vile, yet interlaced and overlaid
With painted cups and fruitage—might these still
Bask in the sun, unconscious their own strength
Of matted stalk and tendril had replaced
The old support thus silently withdrawn!
But no; the beauteous fabric crushes too.
'T is not for my sake but for Anael's sake
I leave her soul this Hakeem where it leans.
Oh could I vanish from her, quit the Isle!
And yet—a thought comes: here my work is done
At every point; the Druses must return—
Have convoy to their birth-place back, whoe'er
The leader be, myself or any Druse—
Venice is pledged to that: 't is for myself,
For my own vengeance in the Prefect's death,
I stay now, not for them: to slay or spare
The Prefect, whom imports it save myself?

He cannot bar their passage from the Isle;
What would his death be but my own reward?
Then, mine I will forego. It is foregone!
Let him escape with all my House's blood!
Ere he can reach land, Djabal disappears,
And Hakeem, Anael loved, shall, fresh as first,
Live in her memory, keeping her sublime
Above the world. She cannot touch that world
By ever knowing what I truly am,
Since Loys,—of mankind the only one
Able to link my present with my past,
My life in Europe with my Island life,
Thence, able to unmask me,—I 've disposed
Safely at last at Rhodes, and . . .

Enter KHALIL.

Khalil. Loys greets thee!

Djabal. Loys? To drag me back? It cannot be!

Anael [*aside*]. Loys! Ah, doubt may not be stifled so!

Khalil. Can I have erred that thou so gazest? Yes,
I told thee not in the glad press of tidings
Of higher import, Loys is returned
Before the Prefect, with, if possible,
Twice the light-heartedness of old. As though
On some inauguration he expects,
To-day, the world's fate hung!

Djabal. —And asks for me?

Khalil. Thou knowest all things. Thee in chief he greets,
But every Druse of us is to be happy
At his arrival, he declares: were Loys
Thou, Master, he could have no wider soul
To take us in with. How I love that Loys!

Djabal [*aside*]. Shame winds me with her tether round and round.

Anael [*aside*]. Loys? I take the trial! it is meet,
The little I can do, be done; that faith,
All I can offer, want no perfecting
Which my own act may compass. Ay, this way
All may go well, nor that ignoble doubt
Be chased by other aid than mine. Advance
Close to my fear, weigh Loys with my Lord,
The mortal with the more than mortal gifts!

Djabal [*aside*]. Before, there were so few deceived! and now
There 's doubtless not one least Druse in the Isle
But, having learned my superhuman claims,
And calling me his Khalif-God, will clash
The whole truth out from Loys at first word!
While Loys, for his part, will hold me up,
With a Frank's unimaginable scorn
Of such imposture, to my people's eyes!

Could I but keep him longer yet awhile
From them, amuse him here until I plan
How he and I at once may leave the Isle!
Khalil I cannot part with from my side—
My only help in this emergency:
There 's Anael!

Anael. Please you?

Djabal. Anael—none but she!
[*To* ANAEL.] I pass some minutes in the chamber there,
Ere I see Loys: you shall speak with him
Until I join you. Khalil follows me.

Anael [*aside*]. As I divined: he bids me save myself
Offers me a probation—I accept.
Let me see Loys!

Loys [*without*]. Djabal!

Anael [*aside*]. 'T is his voice.
The smooth Frank trifler with our people's wrongs,
The self-complacent boy-inquirer, loud
On this and that inflicted tyranny,
—Aught serving to parade an ignorance
Of how wrong feels, inflicted! Let me close
With what I viewed at distance: let myself
Probe this delusion to the core!

Djabal. He comes.
Khalil, along with me! while Anael waits
Till I return once more—and but once more.

ACT III.

ANAEL *and* LOYS.

Anael. Here leave me! Here I wait another. 'T was
For no mad protestation of a love
Like this you say possesses you, I came.
Loys. Love? how protest a love I dare not feel?
Mad words may doubtless have escaped me: you
Are here—I only feel you here!
Anael. No more!
Loys. But once again, whom could you love? I dare,
Alas, say nothing of myself, who am
A Knight now, for when Knighthood we embrace,
Love we abjure: so, speak on safely: speak,
Lest I speak, and betray my faith! And yet
To say your breathing passes through me, changes
My blood to spirit, and my spirit to you,
As Heaven the sacrificer's wine to it—
This is not to protest my love! You said
You could love one . . .
Anael. One only! We are bent

To earth—who raises up my tribe, I love;
The Prefect bows us—who removes him; we
Have ancient rights—who gives them back to us,
I love. Forbear me! Let my hand go!
Loys. Him
You could love only? Where is Djabal? Stay!
[*Aside.*] Yet wherefore stay? Who does this but myself?
Had I apprised her that I come to do
Just this, what more could she acknowledge? No,
She sees into my heart's core! What is it
Feeds either cheek with red, as June some rose?
Why turns she from me? Ah fool, over-fond
To dream I could call up . . .
. . . What never dream
Yet feigned! 'T is love! Oh Anael speak to me!
Djabal—
Anael. Seek Djabal by the Prefect's chamber
At noon! [*She paces the room.*
Loys [*aside*]. And am I not the Prefect now?
Is it my fate to be the only one
Able to win her love, the only one
Unable to accept her love? The past
Breaks up beneath my footing: came I here
This morn as to a slave, to set her free
And take her thanks, and then spend day by day
Content beside her in the Isle? What works

This knowledge in me now? Her eye has broken
The faint disguise away: for Anael's sake
I left the Isle, for her espoused the cause
Of the Druses, all for her I thought, till now,
To live without!

—As I must live! To-day
Ordains me Knight, forbids me . . . never shall
Forbid me to profess myself, heart, arm,
Thy soldier!

Anael. Djabal you demanded, comes.

Loys [*aside*]. What wouldst thou, Loys? See him?
Nought beside
Is wanting: I have felt his voice a spell
From first to last. He brought me here, made known
The Druses to me, drove me hence to seek
Redress for them; and shall I meet him now,
When nought is wanting but a word of his,
To—what?—induce me to spurn hope, faith, pride,
Honour away,—to cast my lot among
His tribe, become a proverb in men's mouths,
Breaking my high pact of companionship
With those who graciously bestowed on me
The very opportunities I turn
Against them! Let me not see Djabal now!

Anael. The Prefect also comes.

Loys [*aside*]. Him let me see,

Not Djabal! Him, degraded at a word,
To soothe me,—to attest belief in me—
And after, Djabal! Yes, ere I return
To her, the Nuncio's vow shall have destroyed
This heart's rebellion, and coerced this will
For ever.

Anael, not before the vows
Irrevocably fix me . . .

Let me fly!
The Prefect, or I lose myself for ever! [*Goes.*

Anael. Yes, I am calm now; just one way remains—
One, to attest my faith in him: for, see,
I were quite lost else: Loys, Djabal, stand
On either side—two men! I balance looks
And words, give Djabal a man's preference,
No more. In Djabal, Hakeem is absorbed!
And for a love like this, the God who saves
My race, selects me for his bride? One way!

Enter DJABAL.

Djabal [*to himself*]. No moment is to waste then; 't is resolved.
If Khalil may be trusted to lead back
My Druses, and if Loys can be lured
Out of the Isle—if I procure his silence,
Or promise never to return at least,—

All 's over. Even now my bark awaits:
I reach the next wild islet and the next,
And lose myself beneath the sun for ever.
And now, to Anael!

Anael. Djabal, I am thine!

Djabal. Mine? Djabal's?—As if Hakeem had not been?

Anael. Not Djabal's? Say first, do you read my thought?
Why need I speak, if you can read my thought?

Djabal. I do not, I have said a thousand times.

Anael. (My secret 's safe, I shall surprise him yet!)
Djabal, I knew your secret from the first:
Djabal, when first I saw you . . . (by our porch
You leant, and pressed the tinkling veil away,
And one fringe fell behind your neck—I see!)
. . . I knew you were not human, for I said
"This dim secluded house where the sea beats
"Is heaven to me—my people's huts are hell
"To them; this august form will follow me,
"Mix with the waves his voice will,—I have him;
"And they, the Prefect! Oh, my happiness
"Rounds to the full whether I choose or no!
"His eyes met mine, he was about to speak,
"His hand grew damp—surely he meant to say
"He let me love him: in that moment's bliss

"I shall forget my people pine for home—
"They pass and they repass with pallid eyes!"
I vowed at once a certain vow; this vow—
Not to embrace you till my tribe was saved.
Embrace me!

Djabal [*apart*]. And she loved me! Nought remained
But that! Nay, Anael, is the Prefect dead?

Anael. Ah, you reproach me! True, his death crowns all,
I know—or should know: and I would do much,
Believe! but, death! Oh, you, who have known death,
Would never doom the Prefect, were death fearful
As we report!
Death!—a fire curls within us
From the foot's palm, and fills up to the brain,
Up, out, then shatters the whole bubble-shell
Of flesh, perchance!
Death!—witness, I would die,
Whate'er death be, would venture now to die
For Khalil, for Maani—what for thee?
Nay but embrace me, Djabal, in assurance
My vow will not be broken, for I must
Do something to attest my faith in you,
Be worthy you!

Djabal [*avoiding her*]. I come for that—to say

Such an occasion is at hand: 't is like
I leave you—that we part, my Anael,—part
For ever!

Anael. We part? Just so! I have succumbed,—
I am, he thinks, unworthy—and nought less
Will serve than such approval of my faith.
Then, we part not! Remains there no way short
Of that? Oh not that!
Death!—yet a hurt bird
Died in my hands; its eyes filmed—"Nay, it sleeps,"
I said, "will wake to-morrow well:" 't was dead.

Djabal. I stand here and time fleets. Anael—I come
To bid a last farewell to you: perhaps
We never meet again. But, ere the Prefect
Arrive . . .

Enter KHALIL, *breathlessly.*

Khalil. He 's here! The Prefect! Twenty guards,
No more: no sign he dreams of danger. All
Awaits thee only. Ayoob, Karshook, keep
Their posts—wait but the deed's accomplishment
To join us with thy Druses to a man.
Still holds his course the Nuncio—near and near
The fleet from Candia steering.

Djabal [*aside*]. All is lost!
—Or won?

Khalil. And I have laid the sacred robe,
The sword, the head-tiar, at the porch—the place
Commanded. Thou wilt hear the Prefect's trumpet.
Djabal. Then I keep Anael,—him then, past recall,
I slay—'t is forced on me. As I began
I must conclude—so be it!
Khalil. For the rest,
Save Loys, our foe's solitary sword,
All is so safe that . . . I will ne'er entreat
Thy post again of thee: tho' danger none,
There must be glory only meet for thee
In slaying the Prefect.
Anael [*aside*]. And 't is now that Djabal
Would leave me!—in the glory meet for him!
Djabal. As glory, I would yield the deed to you
Or any Druse; what peril there may be,
I keep. [*Aside.*] All things conspire to hound me on.
Not now, my soul, draw back, at least! Not now!
The course is plain, howe'er obscure all else.
Once offer this tremendous sacrifice,
Prevent what else will be irreparable,
Secure these transcendental helps, regain
The Cedars—then let all dark clear itself!
I slay him!
Khalil. Anael, and no part for us!
[*To* DJABAL.] Hast thou possessed her with . . .

Djabal [*to* ANAEL]. Whom speak you to?
What is it you behold there? Nay, this smile
Turns stranger. Shudder you? The man must die,
As thousands of our race have died thro' him.
One blow, and I discharge his weary soul
From the flesh that pollutes it! Let him fill
Straight some new expiatory form, of earth
Or sea, the reptile or some aëry thing:
What is there in his death?

Anael. My brother said,
Is there no part in it for us?

Djabal. For Khalil,—
The trumpet will announce the Nuncio's entry;
Here, I shall find the Prefect hastening
In the Pavilion to receive him—here
I slay the Prefect; meanwhile Ayoob leads
The Nuncio with his guards within: once these
Secured in the outer hall, bid Ayoob bar
Entry or egress till I give the sign
Which waits the landing of the argosies
You will announce to me: this double sign
That justice is performed and help arrived,
When Ayoob shall receive, but not before,
Let him throw ope the palace doors, admit
The Druses to behold their tyrant, ere
We leave for ever this detested spot.

Go, Khalil, hurry all! No pause, no pause!
Whirl on the dream, secure to wake anon!

Khalil. What sign? and who the bearer?

Djabal. Who shall show
My ring, admit to Ayoob. How she stands!
Have I not . . . I must have some task for her.
Anael, not that way! 'T is the Prefect's chamber!
Anael, keep you the ring—give you the sign!
(It holds her safe amid the stir.) You will
Be faithful?

Anael [*taking the ring*]. I would fain be worthy. Hark!
[*Trumpet without.*

Khalil. He comes.

Djabal. And I too come.

Anael. One word, but one!
Say, shall you be exalted at the deed?
Then? On the instant?

Djabal. I exalted? What?
He, there—we, thus—our wrongs revenged, our tribe
Set free? Oh, then shall I, assure yourself,
Shall you, shall each of us, be in his death
Exalted!

Khalil. He is here.

Djabal. Away—away! [*They go.*

Enter the PREFECT *with* Guards, *and* LOYS.

The Prefect [*to* Guards]. Back, I say, to the galley every guard!
That's my sole care now; see each bench retains
Its complement of rowers; I embark
O' the instant, since this Knight will have it so.
Alas me! Could you have the heart, my Loys!
[*To a* Guard *who whispers.*] Oh, bring the holy Nuncio here forthwith! [*The* Guards *go.*
Loys, a rueful sight, confess, to see
The grey discarded Prefect leave his post,
With tears i' the eye! So, you are Prefect now?
You depose me—you succeed me? Ha, ha!

Loys. And dare you laugh, whom laughter less becomes
Than yesterday's forced meekness we beheld . . .

Prefect. —When you so eloquently pleaded, Loys,
For my dismissal from the post? Ah, meek
With cause enough, consult the Nuncio else!
And wish him the like meekness: for so staunch
A servant of the Church can scarce have bought
His share in the Isle, and paid for it, hard pieces!
You 've my successor to condole with, Nuncio!
I shall be safe by then i' the galley, Loys!

Loys. You make as you would tell me you rejoice
To leave your scene of . . .

Prefect. Trade in the dear Druses?
Blood and sweat traffic? Spare what yesterday
We heard enough of! Drove I in the Isle
A profitable game? Learn wit, my son,
Which you 'll need shortly! Did it never breed
Suspicion in you, all was not pure profit,
When I, the insatiate . . . and so forth—was bent
On having a partaker in my rule?
Why did I yield this Nuncio half the gain,
If not that I might also shift—what on him?
Half of the peril, Loys!

Loys. Peril?

Prefect. Hark you!
I 'd love you if you 'd let me—this for reason,
You save my life at price of . . . well, say risk
At least, of yours. I came a long time since
To the Isle; our Hospitallers bade me tame
These savage wizards, and reward myself—

Loys. The Knights who so repudiate your crime?

Prefect. Loys, the Knights! we doubtless understood
Each other; as for trusting to reward
From any friend beside myself . . . no, no!
I clutched mine on the spot, when it was sweet,
And I had taste for it. I felt these wizards
Alve—was sure they were not on me, only
When I was on them: but with age comes caution:

And stinging pleasures please less and sting more.
Year by year, fear by fear! The girls were brighter
Than ever ('faith, there 's yet one Anael left,
I set my heart upon—Oh, prithee, let
That brave new sword lie still!)—These joys looked brighter,
But silenter the town, too, as I passed.
With this alcove's delicious memories
Began to mingle visions of gaunt fathers,
Quick-eyed sons, fugitives from the mine, the oar,
Stealing to catch me. Brief, when I began
To quake with fear—(I think I hear the Chapter
Solicited to let me leave, now all
Worth staying for was gained and gone!)—I say,
Just when, for the remainder of my life,
All methods of escape seemed lost—that then
Up should a young hot headed Loys spring,
Talk very long and loud,—in fine, compel
The Knights to break their whole arrangement, have me
Home for pure shame—from this safehold of mine
Where but ten thousand Druses seek my life,
To my wild place of banishment, San Gines
By Murcia, where my three fat manors lying,
Purchased by gains here and the Nuncio's gold,
Are all I have to guard me,—that such fortune

Should fall to me, I hardly could expect.
Therefore I say, I 'd love you.
Loys. Can it be?
I play into your hands then? Oh no, no!
The Venerable Chapter, the Great Order
Sunk o' the sudden into fiends of the pit?
But I will back—will yet unveil you!
Prefect. Me?
To whom?—perhaps Sir Galeas, who in Chapter
Shook his white head thrice—and some dozen times
My hand next morning shook, for value paid!
To that Italian saint, Sir Cosimo?—
Indignant at my wringing year by year
A thousand bezants from the coral-divers,
As you recounted; felt the saint aggrieved?
Well might he—I allowed for his half-share
Merely one hundred. To Sir . . .
Loys. See! you dare
Inculpate the whole Order; yet should I,
A youth, a sole voice, have the power to change
Their evil way, had they been firm in it?
Answer me!
Prefect. Oh, the son of Bretagne's Duke,
And that son's wealth, the father's influence, too,
And the young arm, we 'll even say, my Loys,
—The fear of losing or diverting these

Into another channel, by gainsaying
A novice too abruptly, could not influence
The Order! You might join, for aught they cared,
Their red-cross rivals of the Temple! Well,
I thank you for my part, at all events.
Stay here till they withdraw you! You 'll inhabit
My palace—sleep, perchance, in the alcove
Whither I go to meet our holy friend.
Good! and now disbelieve me if you can,—
This is the first time for long years I enter
Thus [*lifts the arras*] without feeling just as if I lifted
The lid up of my tomb.

Loys. They share his crime!
God's punishment will overtake you yet.

Prefect. Thank you it does not! Pardon this last flash:
I bear a sober visage presently
With the disinterested Nuncio here—
His purchase-money safe at Murcia, too!
Let me repeat—for the first time, no draught
Coming as from a sepulchre salutes me.
When we next meet, this folly may have passed,
We 'll hope. Ha, ha! [*Goes through the arras.*

Loys. Assure me but . . . he 's gone!
He could not lie. Then what have I escaped,
I, who had so nigh given up happiness

For ever, to be linked with him and them!
Oh, opportunest of discoveries! I
Their Knight? I utterly renounce them all!
Hark! What, he meets by this the Nuncio? Yes,
The same hyæna groan-like laughter! Quick—
To Djabal! I am one of them at last,
These simple-hearted Druses—Anael's tribe!
Djabal! She 's mine at last. Djabal, I say! [*Goes.*

ACT IV.

Enter DJABAL.

Djabal. Let me but slay the Prefect. The end now!
To-morrow will be time enough to pry
Into the means I took: suffice, they served,
Ignoble as they were, to hurl revenge
True to its object. [*Seeing the robe, etc. disposed.*
Mine should never so
Have hurried to accomplishment! Thee, Djabal,
Far other mood befitted! Calm the Robe
Should clothe this doom's awarder!
[*Taking the robe.*] Shall I dare
Assume my nation's Robe? I am at least
A Druse again, chill Europe's policy
Drops from me: I dare take the Robe. Why not
The Tiar? I rule the Druses, and what more
Betokens it than rule?—yet—yet— [*Lays down the tiar.*
[*Footsteps in the alcove.*] He comes! [*Taking the sword.*
If the Sword serve, let the Tiar lie! So, feet

Clogged with the blood of twenty years can fall
Thus lightly! Round me, all ye ghosts! He 'll lift . .
Which arm to push the arras wide?—or both?
Stab from the neck down to the heart—there stay!
Near he comes—nearer—the next footstep! Now!
[*As he dashes aside the arras*, ANAEL *is discovered.*
Ha! Anael! Nay, my Anael, can it be?
Heard you the trumpet? I must slay him here,
And here you ruin all. Why speak you not?
Anael, the Prefect comes! [ANAEL *screams.*] So slow to feel
'T is not a sight for you to look upon?
A moment's work—but such work! Till you go,
I must be idle—idle, I risk all! [*Pointing to her hair.*
Those locks are well, and you are beauteous thus,
But with the dagger 't is, I have to do!

Anael. With mine!

Djabal. Blood—Anael?

Anael. Djabal, 't is thy deed!
It must be! I had hoped to claim it mine—
Be worthy thee—but I must needs confess
'T was not I, but thyself . . . not I have . . . Djabal!
Speak to me!

Djabal. Oh, my punishment!

Anael. Speak to me
While I can speak! touch me, despite the blood!

When the command passed from thy soul to mine,
I went, fire leading me, muttering of thee,
And the approaching exaltation,—"make
"One sacrifice!" I said,—and he sat there,
Bade me approach; and, as I did approach,
Thy fire with music burst into my brain.
'T was but a moment's work, thou saidst—perchance
It may have been so! Well, it is thy deed.

Djabal. It is my deed.

Anael. His blood all this!—this! and . . .
And more! Sustain me, Djabal! Wait not—now
Let flash thy glory! Change thyself and me!
It must be! Ere the Druses flock to us!
At least confirm me! Djabal, blood gushed forth—
He was our tyrant—but I looked he 'd fall
Prone as asleep—why else is death called sleep?
Sleep? He bent o'er his breast! 'T is sin, I know,—
Punish me, Djabal, but wilt thou let him?
Be it thou that punishest, not he—who creeps
On his red breast—is here! 'T is the small groan
Of a child—no worse! Bestow the new life, then!
Too swift it cannot be, too strange, surpassing!

[*Following him as he retreats.*

Now! Change us both! Change me and change thou!

Djabal [*sinks on his knees*]. Thus!
Behold my change! You have done nobly. I!—

Anael. Can Hakeem kneel?

Djabal. No Hakeem, and scarce Djabal!
I have dealt falsely, and this woe is come.
No—hear me ere scorn blast me! Once and ever,
The deed is mine. Oh think upon the past!

Anael [*to herself*]. Did I strike once, or twice, or many times?

Djabal. I came to lead my tribe where, bathed in glooms,
Doth Bahumid the Renovator sleep:
Anael, I saw my tribe: I said, "Without
"A miracle this cannot be"—I said
"Be there a miracle!"—for I saw you.

Anael. His head lies south the portal.

Djabal. —Weighed with this
The general good, how could I choose my own?
What matter was my purity of soul?
Little by little I engaged myself—
Heaven would accept me for its instrument,
I hoped: I said Heaven had accepted me.

Anael. Is it this blood breeds dreams in me? Who said
You were not Hakeem? And your miracles—
The fire that plays innocuous round your form?
[*Again changing her whole manner.*
Ah, thou wouldst try me—thou art Hakeem still!

Djabal. Woe—woe! As if the Druses of the Mount
(Scarce Arabs, even there, but here, in the Isle,
Beneath their former selves) should comprehend
The subtle lore of Europe! A few secrets
That would not easily affect the meanest
Of the crowd there, could wholly subjugate
The best of our poor tribe. Again that eye?

Anael [*after a pause springs to his neck*]. Djabal, in this there can be no deceit!
Why, Djabal, were you human only,—think,
Maani is but human, Khalil human,
Loys is human even—did their words
Haunt me, their looks pursue me? Shame on you
So to have tried me! Rather, shame on me
So to need trying! Could I, with the Prefect
And the blood, there—could I see only you?
—Hang by your neck over this gulf of blood?
Speak, I am saved! Speak, Djabal! Am I saved?

[*As* DJABAL *slowly unclasps her arms, and puts her silently from him,*

Hakeem would save me. Thou art Djabal. Crouch!
Bow to the dust, thou basest of our kind!
The pile of thee, I reared up to the cloud—
Full, midway, of our fathers' trophied tombs,
Based on the living rock, devoured not by
The unstable desert's jaws of sand,—falls prone.

Fire, music, quenched: and now thou liest there
A ruin, obscene creatures will moan through.
—Let us come, Djabal!
Djabal. Whither come?
Anael. At once—
Lest so it grow intolerable. Come!
Will I not share it with thee? Best at once!
So, feel less pain! Let them deride,—thy tribe
Now trusting in thee,—Loys shall deride!
Come to them, hand in hand, with me!
Djabal. Where come?
Anael. Where?—to the Druses thou hast wronged!
Confess,
Now that the end is gained—(I love thee now—)
That thou hast so deceived them—(perchance love thee
Better than ever.) Come, receive their doom
Of infamy! O, best of all I love thee!
Shame with the man, no triumph with the God,
Be mine! Come!
Djabal. Never! More shame yet? and why?
Why? You have called this deed mine—it is mine!
And with it I accept its circumstance.
How can I longer strive with fate? The past
Is past: my false life shall henceforth show true
Hear me! The argosies touch land by this;
They bear us to fresh scenes and happier skies.

What if we reign together?—if we keep
Our secret for the Druses' good?—by means
Of even their superstition, plant in them
New life? I learn from Europe: all who seek
Man's good must awe man, by such means as these.
We two will be divine to them—we are!
All great works in this world spring from the ruins
Of greater projects—ever, on our earth,
Babels men block out, Babylons they build.
I wrest the weapon from your hand! I claim
The deed! Retire! You have my ring—you bar
All access to the Nuncio till the forces
From Venice land.

Anael. Thou wilt feign Hakeem then?

Djabal [*putting the Tiara of Hakeem on his head*].
And from this moment that I dare ope wide
Eyes that till now refused to see, begins
My true dominion: for I know myself,
And what am I to personate. No word?

[ANAEL *goes.*

'T is come on me at last! His blood on her——
What memories will follow that! Her eye,
Her fierce distorted lip and ploughed black brow!
Ah, fool! Has Europe then so poorly tamed
The Syrian blood from out thee? Thou, presume
To work in this foul earth by means not foul?

Scheme, as for heaven,—but, on the earth, be glad
If a least ray like heaven's be left thee!
Thus
I shall be calm—in readiness—no way
Surprised. [*A noise without.*
This should be Khalil and my Druses.
Venice is come then! Thus I grasp thee, sword!
Druses, 't is Hakeem saves you! In! Behold
Your Prefect!

Enter LOYS. DJABAL *hides the khandjar in his robe.*

Loys. Oh, well found, Djabal!—but no time for words.
You know who waits there? [*Pointing to the alcove.*
Well!—and that 't is there
He meets the Nuncio? Well? Now, a surprise—
He there—

Djabal. I know—

Loys. ——is now no mortal's lord,
Is absolutely powerless—call him, dead—
He is no longer Prefect—you are Prefect!
Oh, shrink not! I do nothing in the dark,
Nothing unworthy Breton blood, believe!
I understood at once your urgency
That I should leave this isle for Rhodes; I felt
What you were loath to speak—your need of help.
I have fulfilled the task, that earnestness

Imposed on me: have, face to face, confronted
The Prefect in full Chapter, charged on him
The enormities of his long rule; he stood
Mute, offered no defence, no crime denied.
On which, I spoke of you, and of your tribe,
Your faith so like our own, and all you urged
Of old to me: I spoke, too, of your goodness,
Your patience—brief, I hold henceforth the Isle
In charge, am nominally lord,—but you,
You are associated in my rule—
Are the true Prefect! Ay, such faith had they
In my assurance of your loyalty
(For who insults an imbecile old man?)
That we assume the Prefecture this hour.
You gaze at me? Hear greater wonders yet—
I cast down all the fabric I have built.
These Knights, I was prepared to worship . . . .
but
Of that another time; what 's now to say,
Is—I shall never be a Knight! Oh, Djabal,
Here first I throw all prejudice aside,
And call you brother! I am Druse like you:
My wealth, my friends, my power, are wholly yours,
Your people's, which is now my people: for
There is a maiden of your tribe, I love—
She loves me—Khalil's sister——

Djabal. Anael?

Loys. Start you?
Seems what I say, unknightly? Thus it chanced:
When first I came, a novice, to the isle . . .

Enter one of the NUNCIO'S Guards *from the alcove.*

Guard. Oh horrible! Sir Loys! Here is Loys!
And here— [*Others enter from the alcove.*
[*Pointing to* DJABAL.] Secure him, bind him—this is he!
[*They surround* DJABAL.

Loys. Madmen—what is 't you do? Stand from my friend,
And tell me!

Guard. Thou canst have no part in this—
Surely no part! But slay him not! The Nuncio
Commanded, slay him not!

Loys. Speak, or . . .

Guard. The Prefect
Lies murdered there by him thou dost embrace.

Loys. By Djabal? Miserable fools! How Djabal?
[*A* Guard *lifts* DJABAL'S *robe*; DJABAL *flings down the khandjar.*

Loys [*after a pause*]. Thou hast received some insult worse than all,
Some outrage not to be endured—
[*To the* Guards.] Stand back!

He is my friend—more than my friend. Thou hast
Slain him upon that provocation.

Guard. No!

No provocation! 'T is a long devised
Conspiracy: the whole tribe is involved.
He is their Khalif—'t is on that pretence—
Their mighty Khalif who died long ago,
And now comes back to life and light again!
All is just now revealed, I know not how,
By one of his confederates—who, struck
With horror at this murder, first apprised
The Nuncio. As 't was said, we find this Djabal
Here where we take him.

Djabal [*aside*]. Who broke faith with me?

Loys [*to* DJABAL]. Hear'st thou? Speak! Till thou speak, I keep off these,
Or die with thee. Deny this story! Thou
A Khalif, an impostor? Thou, my friend,
Whose tale was of an inoffensive tribe,
With . . . but thou know'st—on that tale's truth I pledged
My faith before the Chapter: what art thou?

Djabal. Loys, I am as thou hast heard. All 's true.
No more concealment! As these tell thee, all
Was long since planned. Our Druses are enough
To crush this handful: the Venetians land
Even now in our behalf. Loys, we part.

Thou, serving much, wouldst fain have served me more;
It might not be. I thank thee. As thou hearest,
We are a separated tribe: farewell!

Loys. Oh where will truth be found now? Canst thou so
Belie the Druses? Do they share thy crime?
Those thou professest of our Breton stock,
Are partners with thee? Why, I saw but now
Khalil, my friend: he spoke with me—no word
Of this! and Anael—whom I love, and who
Loves me—she spoke no word of this.

Djabal. Poor boy!
Anael, who loves thee? Khalil, fast thy friend?
We, offsets from a wandering Count of Dreux?
No: older than the oldest, princelier
Than Europe's princeliest race, our tribe: enough
For thine, that on our simple faith we found
A monarchy to shame your monarchies
At their own trick and secret of success.
The child of this our tribe shall laugh upon
The palace-step of him whose life ere night
Is forfeit, as that child shall know, and yet
Shall laugh there! What, we Druses wait forsooth
The kind interposition of a boy
—Can only save ourselves if thou concede?
—Khalil admire thee? He is my right-hand,

My delegate!—Anael accept thy love?
She is my bride!

Loys. Thy bride? She one of them?

Djabal. My bride!

Loys. And she retains her glorious eyes!
She, with those eyes, has shared this miscreant's guilt!
Ah—who but she directed me to find
Djabal within the Prefect's chamber? Khalil
Bade me seek Djabal there, too. All is truth.
What spoke the Prefect worse of them than this?
Did the Church ill to institute long since
Perpetual warfare with such serpentry?
And I—have I desired to shift my part,
Evade my share in her design? 'T is well.

Djabal. Loys, I wronged thee—but unwittingly:
I never thought there was in thee a virtue
That could attach itself to what thou deemest
A race below thine own. I wronged thee, Loys,
But that is over: all is over now,
Save the protection I ensure against
My people's anger. By their Khalif's side,
Thou art secure and mayst depart: so, come!

Loys. Thy side? I take protection at thy hand?

Enter other Guards.

Guards. Fly with him! Fly, Sir Loys! 'T is too true:

And only by his side thou mayst escape.
The whole tribe is in full revolt: they flock
About the palace—will be here—on thee—
And there are twenty of us, we the Guards
O' the Nuncio, to withstand them! Even we
Had stayed to meet our death in ignorance,
But that one Druse, a single faithful Druse,
Made known the horror to the Nuncio. Fly!
The Nuncio stands aghast. At least let us
Escape thy wrath, O Hakeem! We are nought
In thy tribe's persecution! [*To* Loys.] Keep by him!
They hail him Hakeem, their dead Prince returned:
He is their God, they shout, and at his beck
Are life and death!

Loys [*springing at the khandjar* DJABAL *had thrown down, seizes him by the throat*].

Thus by his side am I!
Thus I resume my knighthood and its warfare,
Thus end thee, miscreant, in thy pride of place!
Thus art thou caught. Without, thy dupes may cluster:
Friends aid thee, foes avoid thee,—thou art Hakeem,
How say they?—God art thou! but also here
Is the least, youngest, meanest the Church calls
Her servant, and his single arm avails
To aid her as she lists. I rise, and thou
Art crushed. Hordes of thy Druses flock without:

Here thou hast me, who represent the Cross,
Honour and Faith, 'gainst Hell, Mahound and thee.
Die! [DJABAL *remains calm.*] Implore my mercy,
Hakeem, that my scorn
May help me! Nay, I cannot ply thy trade;
I am no Druse, no stabber: and thine eye,
Thy form, are too much as they were—my friend
Had such. Speak! Beg for mercy at my foot!
[DJABAL *still silent.*
Heaven could not ask so much of me—not, sure,
So much. I cannot kill him so.
[*After a pause.*] Thou art
Strong in thy cause, then—dost outbrave us, then.
Heardst thou that one of thine accomplices,
Thy very people, has accused thee? Meet
His charge! Thou hast not even slain the Prefect
As thy own vile creed warrants. Meet that Druse!
Come with me and disprove him—be thou tried
By him, nor seek appeal! Promise me this,
Or I will do God's office. What, shalt thou
Boast of assassins at thy beck, yet truth
Want even an executioner? Consent,
Or I will strike—look in my face—I will!

Djabal. Give me again my khandjar, if thou darest!
[LOYS *gives it.*
Let but one Druse accuse me, and I plunge

This home. A Druse betray me? Let us go!
[*Aside.*] Who has betrayed me? [*Shouts without.*
Hearest thou? I hear
No plainer than long years ago I heard
That shout—but in no dream now. They return!
Wilt thou be leader with me, Loys? Well.

ACT V.

The Uninitiated Druses, *filling the hall tumultuously, and speaking together.*

Here flock we, obeying the summons. Lo, Hakeem hath appeared, and the Prefect is dead, and we return to Lebanon! My manufacture of goats' fleece must, I doubt, soon fall away there. Come, old Nasif—link thine arm in mine—we fight, if needs be. Come, what is a great fight-word?—"Lebanon?" (My daughter—my daughter!) —But is Khalil to have the office of Hamza?—Nay, rather, if he be wise, the monopoly of henna and cloves. Where is Hakeem?—The only prophet I ever saw, prophesied at Cairo once, in my youth: a little black Copht, dressed all in black too, with a great stripe of yellow cloth flapping down behind him like the back-fin of a water-serpent. Is this he? Biamrallah! Biamreh! HAKEEM!

Enter the NUNCIO, *with* Guards.

Nuncio [*to his* Attendants]. Hold both, the sorcerer and this accomplice

Ye talk of, that accuseth him! And tell
Sir Loys he is mine, the Church's hope:
Bid him approve himself our Knight indeed!
Lo, this black disemboguing of the Isle!
[*To the* Druses.] Ah children, what a sight for these old eyes
That kept themselves alive this voyage through
To smile their very last on you! I came
To gather one and all you wandering sheep
Into my fold, as though a father came . . .
As though, in coming, a father should . . .
[*To his* Guards.] (Ten, twelve
—Twelve guards of you, and not an outlet? None?
The wizards stop each avenue? Keep close!)
[*To the* Druses.] As if one came to a son's house, I say,
So did I come—no guard with me—to find . . .
Alas—alas!

A Druse. Who is the old man?

Another. Oh, ye are to shout!
Children, he styles you.

Druses. Ay, the Prefect 's slain!
Glory to the Khalif, our Father!

Nuncio. Even so
I find, (ye prompt aright) your father slain.
While most he plotted for your good, that father

(Alas, how kind, ye never knew)—lies slain.
[*Aside.*] (And hell's worm gnaw the glozing knave—with me,
For being duped by his cajoleries!
Are these the Christians? These the docile crew
My bezants went to make me Bishop o'er?)
[*To his* Attendants, *who whisper.*] What say ye does this wizard style himself?
Hakeem? Biamrallah? The third Fatemite?
What is this jargon? He—the insane Khalif,
Dead near three hundred years ago, come back
In flesh and blood again?
Druses. He mutters! Hear ye?
He is blaspheming Hakeem. The old man
Is our dead Prefect's friend. Tear him!
Nuncio. Ye dare not.
I stand here with my five-and-seventy years,
The Patriarch's power behind me, God's above.
Those years have witnessed sin enough; ere now
Misguided men arose against their lords,
And found excuse; but ye, to be enslaved
By sorceries, cheats—alas! the same tricks, tried
On my poor children in this nook o' the earth,
Could triumph, that have been successively
Exploded, laughed to scorn, all nations through:
"*Romaioi, Ioudaioite kai proselutoi,*

"Cretes and Arabians"—you are duped the last.
Said I, refrain from tearing me? I pray ye
Tear me! Shall I return to tell the Patriarch
That so much love was wasted—every gift
Rejected, from his benison I brought,
Down to the galley-full of bezants, sunk
An hour since at the harbour's mouth, by that . . .
That . . . never will I speak his hated name!
[*To his* Servants.] What was the name his fellow slip-
fetter
Called their arch-wizard by? [*They whisper.*] Oh, Djabal
was 't.
Druses. But how a sorcerer? false wherein?
Nuncio. (Ay, Djabal!)
How false? Ye know not, Djabal has confessed . . .
Nay, that by tokens found on him we learn . . .
What I sailed hither solely to divulge—
How by his spells the demons were allured
To seize you: not that these be aught save lies
And mere illusions. Is this clear? I say,
By measures such as these, he would have led you
Into a monstrous ruin: follow ye?
Say, shall ye perish for his sake, my sons?
Druses. Hark ye!
Nuncio. —Be of one privilege amerced?
No! Infinite the Patriarch's mercies are!

No! With the Patriarch's licence, still I bid
Tear him to pieces who misled you! Haste!

Druses. The old man's beard shakes, and his eyes are white fire! After all, I know nothing of Djabal beyond what Karshook says; he knows but what Khalil says, who knows just what Djabal says himself. Now, the little Copht Prophet, I saw at Cairo in my youth, began by promising each bystander three full measures of wheat . . .

Enter KHALIL *and the initiated* DRUSES.

Khalil. Venice and her deliverance are at hand:
Their fleet stands through the harbour. Hath he slain
The Prefect yet? Is Djabal's change come yet?

Nuncio [*to* Attendants]. What 's this of Venice? Who 's this boy?

[Attendants *whisper.*] One Khalil?
Djabal's accomplice, Loys called, but now,
The only Druse, save Djabal's self, to fear?
[*To the Druses.*] I cannot hear ye with these aged ears:
Is it so? Ye would have my troops assist?
Doth he abet him in his sorceries?
Down with the cheat, guards, as my children bid!

[*They spring at* KHALIL; *as he beats them back,*
Stay! No more bloodshed! Spare deluded youth!

Whom seek'st thou? (I will teach him)—whom, my child?
Thou know'st not what these know, what these declare.
I am an old man as thou seest—have done
With life; and what should move me but the truth?
Art thou the only fond one of thy tribe?
'T is I interpret for thy tribe.
Khalil. Oh, this
Is the expected Nuncio! Druses, hear—
Endure ye this? Unworthy to partake
The glory Hakeem gains you! While I speak,
The ships touch land: who makes for Lebanon?
They plant the winged lion in these halls!
Nuncio [*aside*]. If it be true! Venice? Oh, never true!
Yet Venice would so gladly thwart our Knights,
So fain get footing here, stand close by Rhodes!
Oh, to be duped this way!
Khalil. Ere he appear
And lead you gloriously, repent, I say!
Nuncio [*aside*]. Nor any way to stretch the arch-wizard stark
Ere the Venetians come? Cut off the head,
The trunk were easily stilled. [*To the* Druses.] He? Bring him forth!
Since so you needs will have it, I assent.

You 'd judge him, say you, on the spot—confound
The sorcerer in his very circle? Where 's
Our short black-bearded sallow friend who swore
He 'd earn the Patriarch's guerdon by one stab?
Bring Djabal forth at once!

Druses. Ay, bring him forth!
The Patriarch drives a trade in oil and silk,
And we 're the Patriarch's children—true men, we!
Where is the glory? Show us all the glory!

Khalil. You dare not so insult him! What, not see . .
(I tell thee, Nuncio, these are uninstructed,
Untrusted: they know nothing of our Khalif!)
—Not see that if he lets a doubt arise
'T is but to give yourselves the chance of seeming
To have some influence in your own Return!
That all may say ye would have trusted him
Without the all-convincing glory—ay,
And did! Embrace the occasion, friends! For, think—
What wonder when his change takes place? But now
For your sakes, he should not reveal himself.
No: could I ask and have, I would not ask
The change yet!

Enter DJABAL *and* LOYS.

Spite of all, reveal thyself!
I had said, pardon them for me—for Anael—

For our sakes pardon these besotted men—
Ay, for thine own—they hurt not thee! Yet now
One thought swells in me and keeps down all else.
This Nuncio couples shame with thee, has called
Imposture thy whole course, all bitter things
Has said: he is but an old fretful man!
Hakeem—nay, I must call thee Hakeem now—
Reveal thyself! See! Where is Anael? See!

Loys [*to* DJABAL]. Here are thy people. Keep thy word to me!

Djabal. Who of my people hath accused me?

Nuncio. So!

So this is Djabal, Hakeem, and what not?
A fit deed, Loys, for thy first Knight's day!
May it be augury of thy after-life!
Ever prove truncheon of the Church as now
That, Nuncio of the Patriarch, having charge
Of the Isle here, I claim thee [*turning to* DJABAL] as these bid me,
Forfeit for murder done thy lawful prince,
Thou conjurer that peep'st and mutterest!
Why should I hold thee from their hands? (Spells, children?
But hear how I dispose of all his spells!)
Thou art a prophet?—wouldst entice thy tribe
From me?—thou workest miracles? (Attend!

Let him but move me with his spells!) I, Nuncio . . .

Djabal. . . Which how thou camest to be, I say not now,

Though I have also been at Stamboul, Luke!
Ply thee with spells, forsooth! What need of spells?
If Venice, in her Admiral's person, stoop
To ratify thy compact with her foe,
The Hospitallers, for this Isle—withdraw
Her warrant of the deed which reinstates
My people in their freedom, tricked away
By him I slew,—refuse to convoy us
To Lebanon and keep the Isle we leave—
Then will be time to try what spells can do!
Dost thou dispute the Republic's power?

Nuncio. Lo ye!

He tempts me too, the wily exorcist!
No! The renowned Republic was and is
The Patriarch's friend: 't is not for courting Venice
That I—that these implore thy blood of me.
Lo ye, the subtle miscreant! Ha, so subtle?
Ye, Druses, hear him. Will ye be deceived?
How he evades me! Where 's the miracle
He works? I bid him to the proof—fish up
Your galley-full of bezants that he sank!
That were a miracle! One miracle!
Enough of trifling, for it chafes my years.

I am the Nuncio, Druses! I stand forth
To save you from the good Republic's rage
When she shall find her fleet was summoned here
To aid the mummeries of a knave like this.
[*As the* Druses *hesitate, his* Attendants *whisper.*
Ah, well suggested! Why, we hold the while
One who, his close confederate till now,
Confesses Djabal at the last a cheat,
And every miracle a cheat. Who throws me
His head? I make three offers, once I offer,—
And twice . . .

Djabal. Let who moves perish at my foot!

Khalil. Thanks, Hakeem, thanks! Oh, Anael, Maani,
Why tarry they?

Druses [*to each other*]. He can! He can! Live fire—
[*To the* NUNCIO.] I say he can, old man! Thou know'st
him not.
Live fire like that thou seest now in his eyes,
Plays fawning round him. See! The change begins.
All the brow lightens as he lifts his arm.
Look not at me! It was not I!

Djabal. What Druse
Accused me, as he saith? I bid each bone
Crumble within that Druse! None, Loys, none
Of my own people, as thou said'st, have raised
A voice against me.

Nuncio [*aside*]. Venice to come! Death!

Djabal [*continuing*]. Confess and go unscathed, however false!

Seest thou my Druses, Luke? I would submit
To thy pure malice did one Druse confess!
How said I, Loys?

Nuncio [*to his* Attendants *who whisper*]. Ah, ye counsel so?

[*Aloud.*] Bring in the witness, then, who, first of all,
Disclosed the treason! Now I have thee, wizard!
Ye hear that? If one speaks, he bids you tear him
Joint after joint: well then, one does speak! One,
Befooled by Djabal, even as yourselves,
But who hath voluntarily proposed
To expiate, by confessing thus, the fault
Of having trusted him. [*They bring in a veiled* Druse.

Loys. Now, Djabal, now!

Nuncio. Friend, Djabal fronts thee! Make a ring, sons. Speak!

Expose this Djabal—what he was, and how:
The wiles he used, the aims he cherished: all,
Explicitly as late 't was spoken to these
My servants: I absolve and pardon thee.

Loys. Thou hast the dagger ready, Djabal?

Djabal. Speak,
Recreant!

Druses. Stand back, fool! farther! Suddenly
You shall see some huge serpent glide from under
The empty vest, or down will thunder crash!
Back, Khalil!

Khalil. I go back? Thus go I back!
[*To* ANAEL.] Unveil! Nay, thou shalt face the Khalif!
Thus!

[*He tears away* ANAEL'S *veil;* DJABAL *folds his arms and bows his head; the* Druses *fall back;* LOYS *springs from the side of* DJABAL *and the* NUNCIO.

Loys. Then she was true—she only of them all!
True to her eyes—may keep those glorious eyes,
And now be mine, once again mine! Oh, Anael!
Dared I think thee a partner in his crime—
That blood could soil that hand? nay, 't is mine—
Anael,
—Not mine?—who offer thee before all these
My heart, my sword, my name—so thou wilt say
That Djabal, who affirms thou art his bride,
Lies—say but that he lies!

Djabal. Thou, Anael?

Loys. Nay, Djabal, nay, one chance for me—the last!
Thou hast had every other; thou hast spoken
Days, nights, what falsehood listed thee—let me

Speak first now; I will speak now!

Nuncio. Loys, pause!

Thou art the Duke's son, Bretagne's choicest stock,
Loys of Dreux, God's sepulchre's first sword:
This wilt thou spit on, this degrade, this trample
To earth?

Loys [*to* ANAEL]. Who had foreseen that one day, Loys
Would stake these gifts against some other good
In the whole world? I give them thee! I would
My strong will might bestow real shape on them,
That I might see, with my own eyes, thy foot
Tread on their very neck! 'T is not by gifts
I put aside this Djabal: we will stand—
We do stand, see, two men! Djabal, stand forth!
Who 's worth her, I or thou? I—who for Anael
Uprightly, purely kept my way, the long
True way—left thee each by-path, boldly lived
Without the lies and blood,—or thou, or thou?
Me! love me, Anael! Leave the blood and him!
[*To* DJABAL.] Now speak—now, quick on this that I have said,—
Thou with the blood, speak if thou art a man!

Djabal [*to* ANAEL]. And was it thou betrayedst me? 'T is well!
I have deserved this of thee, and submit.

Nor 't is much evil thou inflictest: life
Ends here. The cedars shall not wave for us:
For there was crime, and must be punishment.
See fate! By thee I was seduced, by thee
I perish: yet do I—can I repent?
I with my Arab instinct, thwarted ever
By my Frank policy,—and with, in turn,
My Frank brain, thwarted by my Arab heart—
While these remained in equipoise, I lived
—Nothing; had either been predominant,
As a Frank schemer or an Arab mystic,
I had been something;—now, each has destroyed
The other—and behold, from out their crash,
A third and better nature rises up—
My mere man's-nature! And I yield to it:
I love thee, I who did not love before!

Anael. Djabal!

Djabal. It seemed love, but it was not love:
How could I love while thou adoredst me?
Now thou despisest, art above me so
Immeasurably! Thou, no other, doomest
My death now; this my steel shall execute
Thy judgment; I shall feel thy hand in it.
Oh luxury to worship, to submit,
Transcended, doomed to death by thee!

Anael. My Djabal!

Djabal. Dost hesitate? I force thee then. Approach,
Druses! for I am out of reach of fate;
No further evil waits me. Speak the doom!
Hear, Druses, and hear, Nuncio, and hear, Loys!

Anael. HAKEEM! [*She falls dead.*

[*The* Druses *scream, grovelling before him.*

Druses. Ah Hakeem!—not on me thy wrath!
Biamrallah, pardon! never doubted I!
Ha, dog, how sayest thou?

[*They surround and seize the* NUNCIO *and his* Guards. LOYS *flings himself upon the body of* ANAEL, *on which* DJABAL *continues to gaze as stupefied.*

Nuncio. Caitiffs! Have ye eyes?
Whips, racks should teach you! What, his fools? his dupes?
Leave me! Unhand me!

Khalil [*approaching* DJABAL *timidly*]. Save her for my sake!
She was already thine; she would have shared
To-day thine exaltation: think, this day
Her hair was plaited thus because of thee!
Yes, feel the soft bright hair—feel!

Nuncio [*struggling with those who have seized him*]. What, because
His leman dies for him? You think it hard

To die? Oh, would you were at Rhodes, and choice
Of deaths should suit you!

Khalil [*bending over* ANAEL'S *body*]. Just restore
her life!

So little does it! there—the eyelids tremble!
'T was not my breath that made them: and the lips
Move of themselves. I could restore her life!
Hakeem, we have forgotten—have presumed
On our free converse: we are better taught.
See, I kiss—how I kiss thy garment's hem
For her! She kisses it—Oh, take her deed
In mine! Thou dost believe now, Anael?—See,
She smiles! Were her lips open o'er the teeth
Thus, when I spoke first? She believes in thee!
Go not without her to the cedars, lord!
Or leave us both—I cannot go alone!
I have obeyed thee, if I dare so speak:
Hath Hakeem thus forgot all Djabal knew?
Thou feelest then my tears fall hot and fast
Upon thy hand, and yet thou speakest not?
Ere the Venetian trumpet sound—ere thou
Exalt thyself, O Hakeem! save thou her!

Nuncio. And the accursed Republic will arrive
And find me in their toils—dead, very like,
Under their feet!

What way—not one way yet

To foil them? None? [*Observing* DJABAL'S *face.*
What ails the Khalif? Ah,
That ghastly face! A way to foil them yet!
[*To the* Druses.] Look to your Khalif, Druses! Is that face
God Hakeem's? Where is triumph,—where is . . . what
Said he of exaltation—hath he promised
So much to-day? Why then, exalt thyself!
Cast off that husk, thy form, set free thy soul
In splendour! Now, bear witness! here I stand—
I challenge him exalt himself, and I
Become, for that, a Druse like all of you!

The Druses. Exalt thyself! Exalt thyself, O Hakeem!

Djabal [*advances*]. I can confess now all from first to last.
There is no longer shame for me. I am . . .

[*Here the Venetian trumpet sounds: the* Druses *shout,* DJABAL'S *eye catches the expression of those about him, and, as the old dream comes back, he is again confident and inspired.*

—Am I not Hakeem? And ye would have crawled
But yesterday within these impure courts
Where now ye stand erect! Not grand enough?
—What more could be conceded to such beasts
As all of you, so sunk and base as you,

Than a mere man? A man among such beasts
Was miracle enough: yet him you doubt,
Him you forsake, him fain would you destroy—
With the Venetians at your gate, the Nuncio
Thus—(see the baffled hypocrite!) and, best,
The Prefect there!

Druses. No, Hakeem, ever thine!

Nuncio. He lies—and twice he lies—and thrice he lies!

Exalt thyself, Mahound! Exalt thyself!

Djabal. Druses! we shall henceforth be far away—
Out of mere mortal ken—above the cedars—
But we shall see ye go, hear ye return,
Repeopling the old solitudes,—through thee,
My Khalil! Thou art full of me: I fill
Thee full—my hands thus fill thee! Yestereve,
—Nay, but this morn, I deemed thee ignorant
Of all to do, requiring word of mine
To teach it: now, thou hast all gifts in one,
With truth and purity go other gifts,
All gifts come clustering to that. Go, lead
My people home whate'er betide!
[*Turning to the* Druses.] Ye take
This Khalil for my delegate? To him
Bow as to me? He leads to Lebanon—
Ye follow?

Druses. We follow! Now exalt thyself!

Djabal [*raises* Loys]. Then to thee, Loys! How I wronged thee, Loys!

Yet, wronged, no less thou shalt have full revenge,
Fit for thy noble self, revenge—and thus.
Thou, loaded with such wrongs, the princely soul,
The first sword of Christ's sepulchre—thou shalt
Guard Khalil and my Druses home again!
Justice, no less, God's justice and no more,
For those I leave! To seeking this, devote
Some few days out of thy Knight's brilliant life:
And, this obtained them, leave their Lebanon,
My Druses' blessing in thine ears—(they shall
Bless thee with blessing sure to have its way)
—One cedar-blossom in thy ducal cap,
One thought of Anael in thy heart,—perchance,
One thought of him who thus, to bid thee speed,
His last word to the living speaks! This done,
Resume thy course, and, first amidst the first
In Europe, take my heart along with thee!
Go boldly, go serenely, go augustly—
What shall withstand thee then?

[*He bends over* ANAEL.] And last to thee!
Ah, did I dream I was to have, this day,
Exalted thee? A vain dream: hast thou not
Won greater exaltation? What remains

But press to thee, exalt myself to thee?
Thus I exalt myself, set free my soul!

[*He stabs himself. As he falls, supported by* KHALIL *and* LOYS, *the* Venetians *enter; the* ADMIRAL *advances.*

Admiral. God and St. Mark for Venice! Plant the Lion!

[*At the clash of the planted standard, the* Druses *shout and move tumultuously forward,* LOYS *drawing his sword.*

Djabal [*leading them a few steps between* KHALIL *and* LOYS].
On to the Mountain! At the Mountain, Druses!

[*Dies.*

A SOUL'S TRAGEDY.

ACT FIRST,

BEING WHAT WAS CALLED THE POETRY OF CHIAPPINO'S LIFE:

AND ACT SECOND, ITS PROSE.

PERSONS.

LUITOLFO *and* EULALIA, *betrothed lovers.*
CHIAPPINO, *their friend.*
OGNIBEN, *the Pope's Legate.*
Citizens of Faenza.

TIME, 15—. PLACE, *Faenza.*

A SOUL'S TRAGEDY.

1846.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Inside* LUITOLFO'S *house.* CHIAPPINO, EULALIA.

Eulalia. What is it keeps Luitolfo? Night 's fast falling,
And 't was scarce sunset . . . had the ave-bell
Sounded before he sought the Provost's house?
I think not: all he had to say would take
Few minutes, such a very few, to say!
How do you think, Chiappino? If our lord
The Provost were less friendly to your friend
Than everybody here professes him,
I should begin to tremble—should not you?
Why are you silent when so many times
I turn and speak to you?

Chiappino. That's good!

Eulalia. You laugh!

Chiappino. Yes. I had fancied nothing that bears price
In the whole world was left to call my own;
And, may be, felt a little pride thereat.
Up to a single man's or woman's love,
Down to the right in my own flesh and blood,
There 's nothing mine, I fancied,—till you spoke:
—Counting, you see, as "nothing" the permission
To study this peculiar lot of mine
In silence: well, go silence with the rest
Of the world's good! What can I say, shall serve?

Eulalia. This,—lest you, even more than needs, embitter
Our parting: say your wrongs have cast, for once,
A cloud across your spirit!

Chiappino. How a cloud?

Eulalia. No man nor woman loves you, did you say?

Chiappino. My God, were 't not for thee!

Eulalia. Ay, God remains,
Even did men forsake you.

Chiappino. Oh, not so!
Were 't not for God, I mean, what hope of truth—
Speaking truth, hearing truth, would stay with man?
I, now—the homeless friendless penniless
Proscribed and exiled wretch who speak to you,—
Ought to speak truth, yet could not, for my death,
(The thing that tempts me most) help speaking lies

About your friendship and Luitolfo's courage
And all our townsfolk's equanimity—
Through sheer incompetence to rid myself
Of the old miserable lying trick
Caught from the liars I have lived with,—God,
Did I not turn to thee! It is thy prompting
I dare to be ashamed of, and thy counsel
Would die along my coward lip, I know.
But I do turn to thee. This craven tongue,
These features which refuse the soul its way,
Reclaim thou! Give me truth—truth, power to speak—
And after be sole present to approve
The spoken truth! Or, stay, that spoken truth,
Who knows but you, too, may approve?

Eulalia. Ah, well—
Keep silence then, Chiappino!

Chiappino. You would hear,
You shall now,—why the thing we please to style
My gratitude to you and all your friends
For service done me, is just gratitude
So much as yours was service: no whit more.
I was born here, so was Luitolfo; both
At one time, much with the same circumstance
Of rank and wealth; and both, up to this night
Of parting company, have side by side
Still fared, he in the sunshine—I, the shadow.

"Why?" asks the world. "Because," replies the world
To its complacent self, "these playfellows,
"Who took at church the holy-water drop
"Each from the other's finger, and so forth,—
"Were of two moods: Luitolfo was the proper
"Friend-making, everywhere friend-finding soul,
"Fit for the sunshine, so, it followed him.
"A happy-tempered bringer of the best
"Out of the worst; who bears with what 's past cure,
"And puts so good a face on 't—wisely passive
"Where action 's fruitless, while he remedies
"In silence what the foolish rail against;
"A man to smooth such natures as parade
"Of opposition must exasperate;
"No general gauntlet-gatherer for the weak
"Against the strong, yet over-scrupulous
"At lucky junctures; one who won't forego
"The after-battle work of binding wounds,
"Because, forsooth he 'd have to bring himself
"To side with wound-inflictors for their leave!"
—Why do you gaze, nor help me to repeat
What comes so glibly from the common mouth,
About Luitolfo and his so-styled friend?

Eulalia. Because that friend's sense is obscured . . .

Chiappino. I thought
You would be readier with the other half

Of the world's story, my half! Yet, 't is true.
For all the world does say it. Say your worst!
True, I thank God, I ever said "you sin,"
When a man did sin: if I could not say it,
I glared it at him; if I could not glare it,
I prayed against him; then my part seemed over.
God's may begin yet: so it will, I trust.

Eulalia. If the world outraged you, did we?

Chiappino. What 's "me"
That you use well or ill? It 's man, in me,
All your successes are an outrage to,
You all, whom sunshine follows, as you say!
Here 's our Faenza birthplace; they send here
A provost from Ravenna: how he rules,
You can at times be eloquent about.
"Then, end his rule!"—"Ah yes, one stroke does that!
"But patience under wrong works slow and sure.
"Must violence still bring peace forth? He, beside,
"Returns so blandly one's obeisance! ah—
"Some latent virtue may be lingering yet,
"Some human sympathy which, once excite,
"And all the lump were leavened quietly:
"So, no more talk of striking, for this time!"
But I, as one of those he rules, won't bear
These pretty takings-up and layings-down
Our cause, just as you think occasion suits.

Enough of earnest, is there? You 'll play, will you?
Diversify your tactics, give submission,
Obsequiousness and flattery a turn,
While we die in our misery patient deaths?
We all are outraged then, and I the first:
I, for mankind, resent each shrug and smirk,
Each beck and bend, each . . . all you do and are,
I hate!

Eulalia. We share a common censure, then.
T is well you have not poor Luitolfo's part
Nor mine to point out in the wide offence.

Chiappino. Oh, shall I let you so escape me, lady?
Come, on your own ground, lady,—from yourself,
(Leaving the people's wrong, which most is mine)
What have I got to be so grateful for?
These three last fines, no doubt, one on the other
Paid by Luitolfo?

Eulalia. Shame, Chiappino!

Chiappino. Shame
Fall presently on who deserves it most!
—Which is to see. He paid my fines—my friend,
Your prosperous smooth lover presently,
Then, scarce your wooer,—soon, your husband: well—
I loved you.

Eulalia. Hold!

Chiappino. You knew it, years ago.

When my voice faltered and my eye grew dim
Because you gave me your silk mask to hold—
My voice that greatens when there 's need to curse
The people's Provost to their heart's content,
—My eye, the Provost, who bears all men's eyes,
Banishes now because he cannot bear,—
You knew . . . but you do your parts—my part, I:
So be it! You flourish, I decay: all 's well.

Eulalia. I hear this for the first time.

Chiappino. The fault 's there?
Then my days spoke not, and my nights of fire
Were voiceless? Then the very heart may burst,
Yet all prove nought, because no mincing speech
Tells leisurely that thus it is and thus?
Eulalia, truce with toying for this once!
A banished fool, who troubles you to-night
For the last time—why, what 's to fear from me?
You knew I loved you!

Eulalia. Not so, on my faith!
You were my now-affianced lover's friend—
Came in, went out with him, could speak as he.
All praise your ready parts and pregnant wit;
See how your words come from you in a crowd!
Luitolfo 's first to place you o'er himself
In all that challenges respect and love:
Yet you were silent then, who blame me now.

I say all this by fascination, sure:
I, all but wed to one I love, yet listen!
It must be, you are wronged, and that the wrongs
Luitolfo pities . . .

Chiappino. —You too pity? Do!
But hear first what my wrongs are; so began
This talk and so shall end this talk. I say,
Was 't not enough that I must strive (I saw)
To grow so far familiar with your charms
As next contrive some way to win them—which
To do, an age seemed far too brief—for, see!
We all aspire to heaven; and there lies heaven
Above us: go there! Dare we go? no, surely!
How dare we go without a reverent pause,
A growing less unfit for heaven? Just so,
I dared not speak: the greater fool, it seems!
Was 't not enough to struggle with such folly,
But I must have, beside, the very man
Whose slight free loose and incapacious soul
Gave his tongue scope to say whate'er he would
—Must have him load me with his benefits
—For fortune's fiercest stroke?

Eulalia. Justice to him
That 's now entreating, at his risk perhaps,
Justice for you! Did he once call those acts
Of simple friendship—bounties, benefits?

Chiappino. No: the straight course had been to call
them thus.
Then, I had flung them back, and kept myself
Unhampered, free as he to win the prize
We both sought. But "the gold was dross," he said:
"He loved me, and I loved him not: why spurn
"A trifle out of superfluity?
"He had forgotten he had done as much."
So had not I! Henceforth, try as I could
To take him at his word, there stood by you
My benefactor; who might speak and laugh
And urge his nothings, even banter me
Before you—but my tongue was tied. A dream!
Let 's wake: your husband . . . how you shake at that!
Good—my revenge!
Eulalia. Why should I shake? What forced
Or forces me to be Luitolfo's bride?
Chiappino. There 's my revenge, that nothing forces
you.
No gratitude, no liking of the eye
Nor longing of the heart, but the poor bond
Of habit—here so many times he came,
So much he spoke,—all these compose the tie
That pulls you from me. Well, he paid my fines,
Nor missed a cloak from wardrobe, dish from table;
He spoke a good word to the Provost here,

Held me up when my fortunes fell away
—It had not looked so well to let me drop—
Men take pains to preserve a tree-stump, even,
Whose boughs they played beneath—much more a friend.
But one grows tired of seeing, after the first,
Pains spent upon impracticable stuff
Like me. I could not change: you know the rest.
I 've spoke my mind too fully out, by chance,
This morning to our Provost; so, ere night
I leave the city on pain of death. And now
On my account there 's gallant intercession
Goes forward—that 's so graceful!—and anon
He 'll noisily come back: "the intercession
"Was made and fails; all 's over for us both;
"'T is vain contending; I would better go."
And I do go—and straight to you he turns
Light of a load; and ease of that permits
His visage to repair the natural bland
Œconomy, sore broken late to suit
My discontent. Thus, all are pleased—you, with him,
He with himself, and all of you with me
—"Who," say the citizens, "had done far better
"In letting people sleep upon their woes,
"If not possessed with talent to relieve them
"When once awake;—but then I had," they 'll say,
"Doubtless some unknown compensating pride

"In what I did; and as I seem content
"With ruining myself, why, so should they be."
And so they are, and so be with his prize
The devil, when he gets them speedily!
Why does not your Luitolfo come? I long
To don this cloak and take the Lugo path.
It seems you never loved me, then?

Eulalia. Chiappino!

Chiappino. Never?

Eulalia. Never.

Chiappino. That 's sad. Say what I might,
There was no help from being sure this while
You loved me. Love like mine must have return,
I thought: no river starts but to some sea.
And had you loved me, I could soon devise
Some specious reason why you stifled love,
Some fancied self-denial on your part,
Which made you choose Luitolfo; so, excepting
From the wide condemnation of all here,
One woman. Well, the other dream may break!
If I knew any heart, as mine loved you,
Loved me, though in the vilest breast 't were lodged,
I should, I think, be forced to love again:
Else there 's no right nor reason in the world.

Eulalia. "If you knew," say you,—but I did not know.

That 's where you 're blind, Chiappino !—a disease
Which if I may remove, I 'll not repent
The listening to. You cannot, will not, see
How, place you but in every circumstance
Of us, you are just now indignant at,
You 'd be as we.

Chiappino. I should be? . . . that; again!
I, to my friend, my country and my love,
Be as Luitolfo and these Faentines?

Eulalia. As we.

Chiappino. Now, I 'll say something to remember.
I trust in nature for the stable laws
Of beauty and utility.—Spring shall plant,
And Autumn garner to the end of time:
I trust in God—the right shall be the right
And other than the wrong, while he endures:
I trust in my own soul, that can perceive
The outward and the inward, nature's good
And God's: so, seeing these men and myself,
Having a right to speak, thus do I speak.
I 'll not curse—God bears with them, well may I—
But I—protest against their claiming me.
I simply say, if that 's allowable.
I would not (broadly) do as they have done.
—God curse this townful of born slaves, bred slaves,
Branded into the blood and bone, slaves! Curse

Whoever loves, above his liberty,
House, land or life! and . . . [*A knocking without.*
—bless my hero-friend,
Luitolfo!

Eulalia. How he knocks!

Chiappino. The peril, lady!
"Chiappino, I have run a risk—a risk!
"For when I prayed the Provost (he 's my friend)
"To grant you a week's respite of the sentence
"That confiscates your goods, exiles yourself,
"He shrugged his shoulder—I say, shrugged it! Yes,
"And fright of that drove all else from my head.
"Here 's a good purse of *scudi*: off with you,
"Lest of that shrug come what God only knows!
"The *scudi*—friend, they 're trash—no thanks, I beg!
"Take the north gate,—for San Vitale's suburb,
"Whose double taxes you appealed against,
"In discomposure at your ill-success
"Is apt to stone you: there, there—only go!
"Beside, Eulalia here looks sleepily.
"Shake . . . oh, you hurt me, so you squeeze my wrist!"
—Is it not thus you 'll speak, adventurous friend?

[*As he opens the door,* LUITOLFO *rushes in, his garments disordered.*

Eulalia. Luitolfo! Blood?

Luitolfo. There 's more—and more of it!

Eulalia—take the garment! No—you, friend!
You take it and the blood from me—you dare!
Eulalia. Oh, who has hurt you? where 's the wound?
Chiappino. "Who," say you?
The man with many a touch of virtue yet!
The Provost's friend has proved too frank of speech,
And this comes of it. Miserable hound!
This comes of temporizing, as I said!
Here 's fruit of your smooth speeches and soft looks!
Now see my way! As God lives, I go straight
To the palace and do justice, once for all!
Luitolfo. What says he?
Chiappino. I 'll do justice on him.
Luitolfo. Him?
Chiappino. The Provost.
Luitolfo. I 've just killed him.
Eulalia. Oh, my God!
Luitolfo. My friend, they 're on my trace; they 'll have me—now!
They 're round him, busy with him: soon they 'll find
He 's past their help, and then they 'll be on me!
Chiappino, save Eulalia! I forget . . .
Were you not bound for . . .
Chiappino. Lugo?
Luitolfo. Ah—yes—yes!
That was the point I prayed of him to change.

Well, go—be happy! Is Eulalia safe?
They 're on me!

Chiappino. 'T is through me they reach you, then!
Friend, seem the man you are! Lock arms—that 's right!
Now tell me what you 've done; explain how you
That still professed forbearance, still preached peace,
Could bring yourself . . .

Luitolfo. What was peace for, Chiappino?
I tried peace: did that promise, when peace failed,
Strife should not follow? All my peaceful days
Were just the prelude to a day like this.
I cried "You call me 'friend': save my true friend!
"Save him, or lose me!"

Chiappino. But you never said
You meant to tell the Provost thus and thus.

Luitolfo. Why should I say it? What else did I mean?

Chiappino. Well? He persisted?

Luitolfo. —"Would so order it
"You should not trouble him too soon again."
I saw a meaning in his eye and lip;
I poured my heart's store of indignant words
Out on him: then—I know not! He retorted,
And I . . . some staff lay there to hand—I think
He bade his servants thrust me out—I struck . . .
Ah, they come! Fly you, save yourselves, you two!

The dead back-weight of the beheading axe!
The glowing trip-hook, thumbscrews and the gadge!
Eulalia. They do come! Torches in the Place!
Farewell,
Chiappino! You can work no good to us—
Much to yourself; believe not, all the world
Must needs be cursed henceforth!
Chiappino. And you?
Eulalia. I stay.
Chiappino. Ha, ha! Now, listen! I am master here!
This was my coarse disguise; this paper shows
My path of flight and place of refuge—see—
Lugo, Argenta, past San Nicolo,
Ferrara, then to Venice and all 's safe!
Put on the cloak! His people have to fetch
A compass round about. There 's time enough
Ere they can reach us, so you straightway make
For Lugo . . . nay, he hears not! On with it—
The cloak, Luitolfo, do you hear me? See—
He obeys he knows not how. Then, if I must—
Answer me! Do you know the Lugo gate?
Eulalia. The north-west gate, over the bridge?
Luitolfo. I know.
Chiappino. Well, there—you are not frightened? all my route
Is traced in that: at Venice you escape

Their power. Eulalia, I am master here!

[*Shouts from without. He pushes out* LUITOLFO, *who complies mechanically.*

In time! Nay, help me with him—so! He 's gone.

Eulalia. What have you done? On you, perchance, all know

The Provost's hater, will men's vengeance fall

As our accomplice.

Chiappino. Mere accomplice? See!

[*Putting on* LUITOLFO'S *vest.*

Now, lady, am I true to my profession,

Or one of these?

Eulalia. You take Luitolfo's place?

Chiappino. Die for him.

Eulalia. Well done! [*Shouts increase.*

Chiappino. How the people tarry!

I can't be silent; I must speak: or sing—

How natural to sing now!

Eulalia. Hush and pray!

We are to die; but even I perceive

'T is not a very hard thing so to die.

My cousin of the pale-blue tearful eyes,

Poor Cesca, suffers more from one day's life

With the stern husband; Tisbe's heart goes forth

Each evening after that wild son of hers,

To track his thoughtless footstep through the streets:

How easy for them both to die like this!
I am not sure that I could live as they.

Chiappino. Here they come, crowds! They pass the gate? Yes!—No!—
One torch is in the courtyard. Here flock all.

Eulalia. At least Luitolfo has escaped. What cries!

Chiappino. If they would drag one to the market-place,
One might speak there!

Eulalia. List, list!

Chiappino. They mount the steps.

Enter the Populace.

Chiappino. I killed the Provost!

The Populace [*speaking together*]. 'T was Chiappino, friends!
Our saviour! The best man at last as first!
He who first made us feel what chains we wore,
He also strikes the blow that shatters them,
He at last saves us—our best citizen!
—Oh, have you only courage to speak now?
My eldest son was christened a year since
"Cino" to keep Chiappino's name in mind—
Cino, for shortness merely, you observe!
The city 's in our hands. The guards are fled.
Do you, the cause of all, come down—come up—
Come out to counsel us, our chief, our king.

Whate'er rewards you! Choose your own reward!
The peril over, its reward begins!
Come and harangue us in the market-place!

Eulalia. Chiappino?

Chiappino. Yes—I understand your eyes!
You think I should have promptlier disowned
This deed with its strange unforeseen success,
In favour of Luitolfo. But the peril,
So far from ended, hardly seems begun.
To-morrow, rather, when a calm succeeds,
We easily shall make him full amends:
And meantime—if we save them as they pray,
And justify the deed by its effects?

Eulalia. You would, for worlds, you had denied at once.

Chiappino. I know my own intention, be assured!
All 's well. Precede us, fellow-citizens!

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The Market-place.* LUITOLFO *in disguise mingling with the* Populace *assembled opposite the* Provost's *Palace.*

1*st Bystander* [*to* LUITOLFO]. You, a friend of Luitolfo's? Then, your friend is vanished,—in all probability killed on the night that his patron the tyrannical Provost was loyally suppressed here, exactly a month ago, by our illustrious fellow-citizen, thrice-noble saviour, and new Provost that is like to be, this very morning,—Chiappino!

Luitolfo. He the new Provost?

2*nd Bystander.* Up those steps will he go, and beneath yonder pillar stand, while Ogniben, the Pope's Legate from Ravenna, reads the new dignitary's title to the people, according to established custom: for which reason, there is the assemblage you inquire about.

Luitolfo. Chiappino—the late Provost's successor? Impossible! But tell me of that presently. What I would know first of all is, wherefore Luitolfo must so necessarily have been killed on that memorable night?

3*rd Bystander.* You were Luitolfo's friend? So was I.

Never, if you will credit me, did there exist so poor-spirited a milksop. He, with all the opportunities in the world, furnished by daily converse with our oppressor, would not stir a finger to help us: and, when Chiappino rose in solitary majesty and . . . how does one go on saying? . . . dealt the godlike blow,—this Luitolfo, not unreasonably fearing the indignation of an aroused and liberated people, fled precipitately. He may have got trodden to death in the press at the south-east gate, when the Provost's guards fled through it to Ravenna, with their wounded master,—if he did not rather hang himself under some hedge.

Luitolfo. Or why not simply have lain perdue in some quiet corner,—such as San Cassiano, where his estate was,—receiving daily intelligence from some sure friend, meanwhile, as to the turn matters were taking here—how, for instance, the Provost was not dead, after all, only wounded—or, as to-day's news would seem to prove, how Chiappino was not Brutus the Elder, after all, only the new Provost—and thus Luitolfo be enabled to watch a favourable opportunity for returning? Might it not have been so?

3rd Bystander. Why, he may have taken that care of himself, certainly, for he came of a cautious stock. I 'll tell you how his uncle, just such another gingerly treader on tiptoes with finger on lip,—how he met his death in the

great plague-year: *dico vobis!* Hearing that the seventeenth house in a certain street was infected, he calculates to pass it in safety by taking plentiful breath, say, when he shall arrive at the eleventh house; then scouring by, holding that breath, till he be got so far on the other side as number twenty-three, and thus elude the danger.—And so did he begin; but, as he arrived at thirteen, we will say, —thinking to improve on his precaution by putting up a little prayer to St. Nepomucene of Prague, this exhausted so much of his lungs' reserve, that at sixteen it was clean spent,—consequently at the fatal seventeen he inhaled with a vigour and persistence enough to suck you any latent venom out of the heart of a stone—Ha, ha!

Luitolfo [*aside*]. (If I had not lent that man the money he wanted last spring, I should fear this bitterness was attributable to me.) Luitolfo is dead then, one may conclude?

3rd Bystander. Why, he had a house here, and a woman to whom he was affianced; and as they both pass naturally to the new Provost, his friend and heir . . .

Luitolfo. Ah, I suspected you of imposing on me with your pleasantry! I know Chiappino better.

1st Bystander. (Our friend has the bile! After all, I do not dislike finding somebody vary a little this general gape of admiration at Chiappino's glorious qualities.)

Pray, how much may you know of what has taken place in Faenza since that memorable night?

Luitolfo. It is most to the purpose, that I know Chiappino to have been by profession a hater of that very office of Provost, you now charge him with proposing to accept.

1*st Bystander.* Sir, I'll tell you. That night was indeed memorable. Up we rose, a mass of us, men, women, children; out fled the guards with the body of the tyrant; we were to defy the world: but, next grey morning, "What will Rome say?" began everybody. You know we are governed by Ravenna, which is governed by Rome. And quietly into the town, by the Ravenna road, comes on muleback a portly personage, Ogniben by name, with the quality of Pontifical Legate; trots briskly through the streets humming a "*Cur fremuere gentes*," and makes directly for the Provost's Palace—there it faces you. "One Messer Chiappino is your leader? I have known three-and-twenty leaders of revolts!" (laughing gently to himself)—"Give me the help of your arm from my mule to yonder steps under the pillar—So! And now, my revolters and good friends, what do you want? The guards burst into Ravenna last night bearing your wounded Provost; and, having had a little talk with him, I take on myself to come and try appease the disorderliness, before Rome, hearing of it, resort to another method: 't is I come, and not another, from a certain

love I confess to, of composing differences. So, do you understand, you are about to experience this unheard-of tyranny from me, that there shall be no heading nor hanging, no confiscation nor exile: I insist on your simply pleasing yourselves. And now, pray, what does please you? To live without any government at all? Or having decided for one, to see its minister murdered by the first of your body that chooses to find himself wronged, or disposed for reverting to first principles and a justice anterior to all institutions,—and so will you carry matters, that the rest of the world must at length unite and put down such a den of wild beasts? As for vengeance on what has just taken place,—once for all, the wounded man assures me he cannot conjecture who struck him; and this so earnestly, that one may be sure he knows perfectly well what intimate acquaintance could find admission to speak with him late last evening. I come not for vengeance therefore, but from pure curiosity to hear what you will do next." And thus he ran on, on, easily and volubly, till he seemed to arrive quite naturally at the praise of law, order, and paternal government by somebody from rather a distance. All our citizens were in the snare, and about to be friends with so congenial an adviser; but that Chiappino suddenly stood forth, spoke out indignantly, and set things right again.

Luitolfo. Do you see? I recognize him there!

3rd Bystander. Ay but, mark you, at the end of Chiappino's longest period in praise of a pure republic,—"And by whom do I desire such a government should be administered, perhaps, but by one like yourself?"—returns the Legate: thereupon speaking for a quarter of an hour together, on the natural and only legitimate government by the best and wisest. And it should seem there was soon discovered to be no such vast discrepancy at bottom between this and Chiappino's theory, place but each in its proper light. "Oh, are you there?" quoth Chiappino: "Ay, in that, I agree," returns Chiappino: and so on.

Luitolfo. But did Chiappino cede at once to this?

1st Bystander. Why, not altogether at once. For instance, he said that the difference between him and all his fellows was, that they seemed all wishing to be kings in one or another way,—"whereas what right," asked he, "has any man to wish to be superior to another?"—whereat, "Ah, sir," answers the Legate, "this is the death of me, so often as I expect something is really going to be revealed to us by you clearer-seers, deeper-thinkers—this—that your right-hand (to speak by a figure) should be found taking up the weapon it displayed so ostentatiously, not to destroy any dragon in our path, as was prophesied, but simply to cut off its own fellow left-hand: yourself set about attacking yourself. For see

now! Here are you who, I make sure, glory exceedingly in knowing the noble nature of the soul, its divine impulses, and so forth; and with such a knowledge you stand, as it were, armed to encounter the natural doubts and fears as to that same inherent nobility, which are apt to waylay us, the weaker ones, in the road of life. And when we look eagerly to see them fall before you, lo, round you wheel, only the left-hand gets the blow; one proof of the soul's nobility destroys simply another proof, quite as good, of the same, for you are found delivering an opinion like this! Why, what is this perpetual yearning to exceed, to subdue, to be better than, and a king over, one's fellows,—all that you so disclaim, —but the very tendency yourself are most proud of, and under another form, would oppose to it,—only in a lower stage of manifestation? You don't want to be vulgarly superior to your fellows after their poor fashion—to have me hold solemnly up your gown's tail, or hand you an express of the last importance from the Pope, with all these bystanders noticing how unconcerned you look the while: but neither does our gaping friend, the burgess yonder, want the other kind of kingship, that consists in understanding better than his fellows this and similar points of human nature, nor to roll under his tongue this sweeter morsel still,—the feeling that, through immense philosophy, he does *not* feel, he rather thinks, above

you and me!" And so chatting, they glided off arm-in-arm.

Luitolfo. And the result is . . .

1*st Bystander.* Why that, a month having gone by, the indomitable Chiappino, marrying as he will Luitolfo's love—at all events succeeding to Luitolfo's wealth—becomes the first inhabitant of Faenza, and a proper aspirant to the Provostship; which we assemble here to see conferred on him this morning. The Legate's Guard to clear the way! He will follow presently.

Luitolfo [*withdrawing a little*]. I understand the drift of Eulalia's communications less than ever. Yet she surely said, in so many words, that Chiappino was in urgent danger: wherefore, disregarding her injunction to continue in my retreat and await the result of—what she called, some experiment yet in process—I hastened here without her leave or knowledge: how could I else? But if this they say be true—if it were for such a purpose, she and Chiappino kept me away . . . Oh, no, no! I must confront him and her before I believe this of them. And at the word, see!

Enter CHIAPPINO *and* EULALIA.

Eulalia. We part here, then? The change in your principles would seem to be complete.

Chiappino. Now, why refuse to see that in my present

course I change no principles, only re-adapt them and more adroitly? I had despaired of, what you may call the material instrumentality of life; of ever being able to rightly operate on mankind through such a deranged machinery as the existing modes of government: but now, if I suddenly discover how to inform these perverted institutions with fresh purpose, bring the functionary limbs once more into immediate communication with, and subjection to, the soul I am about to bestow on them—do you see? Why should one desire to invent, as long as it remains possible to renew and transform? When all further hope of the old organization shall be extinct, then, I grant you, it may be time to try and create another.

Eulalia. And there being discoverable some hope yet in the hitherto much-abused old system of absolute government by a Provost here, you mean to take your time about endeavouring to realize those visions of a perfect State, we once heard of?

Chiappino. Say, I would fain realize my conception of a palace, for instance, and that there is, abstractedly, but a single way of erecting one perfectly. Here, in the market-place is my allotted building-ground; here I stand without a stone to lay, or a labourer to help me,—stand, too, during a short day of life, close on which the night comes. On the other hand, circumstances sud-

denly offer me (turn and see it!) the old Provost's house to experiment upon—ruinous, if you please, wrongly constructed at the beginning, and ready to tumble now. But materials abound, a crowd of workmen offer their services; here, exists yet a Hall of Audience of originally noble proportions, there a Guest-chamber of symmetrical design enough: and I may restore, enlarge, abolish or unite these to heart's content. Ought I not make the best of such an opportunity, rather than continue to gaze disconsolately with folded arms on the flat pavement here, while the sun goes slowly down, never to rise again? Since you cannot understand this nor me, it is better we should part as you desire.

Eulalia. So, the love breaks away too!

Chiappino. No, rather my soul's capacity for love widens —needs more than one object to content it,—and, being better instructed, will not persist in seeing all the component parts of love in what is only a single part, —nor in finding that so many and so various loves are all united in the love of a woman,—manifold uses in one instrument, as the savage has his sword, staff, sceptre and idol, all in one club-stick. Love is a very compound thing. The intellectual part of my love I shall give to men, the mighty dead or the illustrious living; and determine to call a mere sensual instinct by as few fine names as possible. What do I lose?

Eulalia. Nay, I only think, what do I lose? and, one more word—which shall complete my instruction—does friendship go too? What of Luitolfo, the author of your present prosperity?

Chiappino. How the author?

Eulalia. That blow now called yours . . .

Chiappino. Struck without principle or purpose, as by a blind natural operation: yet to which all my thought and life directly and advisedly tended. I would have struck it, and could not: he would have done his utmost to avoid striking it, yet did so. I dispute his right to that deed of mine—a final action with him, from the first effect of which he fled away,—a mere first step with me, on which I base a whole mighty superstructure of good to follow. Could he get good from it?

Eulalia. So we profess, so we perform!

Enter OGNIBEN. EULALIA *stands apart.*

Ogniben. I have seen three-and-twenty leaders of revolts. By your leave, sir! Perform? What does the lady say of performing?

Chiappino. Only the trite saying, that we must not trust profession, only performance.

Ogniben. She 'll not say that, sir, when she knows you longer; you 'll instruct her better. Ever judge of men

by their professions! For though the bright moment of promising is but a moment and cannot be prolonged, yet, if sincere in its moment's extravagant goodness, why, trust it and know the man by it, I say—not by his performance; which is half the world's work, interfere as the world needs must, with its accidents and circumstances: the profession was purely the man's own. I judge people by what they might be,—not are, nor will be.

Chiappino. But have there not been found, too, performing natures, not merely promising?

Ogniben. Plenty. Little Bindo of our town, for instance, promised his friend, great ugly Masaccio, once, "I will repay you!"—for a favour done him. So, when his father came to die, and Bindo succeeded to the inheritance, he sends straightway for Masaccio and shares all with him—gives him half the land, half the money, half the kegs of wine in the cellar. "Good," say you: and it is good. But had little Bindo found himself possessor of all this wealth some five years before—on the happy night when Masaccio procured him that interview in the garden with his pretty cousin Lisa—instead of being the beggar he then was,—I am bound to believe that in the warm moment of promise he would have given away all the wine-kegs and all the money and all the land, and only reserved to himself

some hut on a hill-top hard by, whence he might spend his life in looking and seeing his friend enjoy himself: he meant fully that much, but the world interfered.—To our business! Did I understand you just now within-doors? You are not going to marry your old friend's love, after all?

Chiappino. I must have a woman that can sympathize with, and appreciate me, I told you.

Ogniben. Oh, I remember! you, the greater nature, needs must have a lesser one (—avowedly lesser—contest with you on that score would never do)—such a nature must comprehend you, as the phrase is, accompany and testify of your greatness from point to point onward. Why, that were being not merely as great as yourself, but greater considerably! Meantime, might not the more bounded nature as reasonably count on your appreciation of it, rather?—on your keeping close by it, so far as you both go together, and then going on by yourself as far as you please? Thus God serves us.

Chiappino. And yet a woman that could understand the whole of me, to whom I could reveal alike the strength and the weakness—

Ogniben. Ah, my friend, wish for nothing so foolish! Worship your love, give her the best of you to see; be to her like the western lands (they bring us such strange news of) to the Spanish Court; send her only

your lumps of gold, fans of feathers, your spirit-like birds, and fruits and gems! So shall you, what is unseen of you, be supposed altogether a paradise by her,—as these western lands by Spain: though I warrant there is filth, red baboons, ugly reptiles and squalor enough, which they bring Spain as few samples of as possible. Do you want your mistress to respect your body generally? Offer her your mouth to kiss: don't strip off your boot and put your foot to her lips! You understand my humour by this time? I help men to carry out their own principles: if they please to say two and two make five, I assent, so they will but go on and say, four and four make ten.

Chiappino. But these are my private affairs; what I desire you to occupy yourself about, is my public appearance presently: for when the people hear that I am appointed Provost, though you and I may thoroughly discern—and easily, too—the right principle at bottom of such a movement, and how my republicanism remains thoroughly unaltered, only takes a form of expression hitherto commonly judged (and heretofore by myself) incompatible with its existence,—when thus I reconcile myself to an old form of government instead of proposing a new one . . .

Ogniben. Why, you must deal with people broadly. Begin at a distance from this matter and say,—New

truths, old truths! sirs, there is nothing new possible to be revealed to us in the moral world; we know all we shall ever know: and it is for simply reminding us, by their various respective expedients, how we do know this and the other matter, that men get called prophets, poets and the like. A philosopher's life is spent in discovering that, of the half-dozen truths he knew when a child, such an one is a lie, as the world states it in set terms; and then, after a weary lapse of years, and plenty of hard-thinking, it becomes a truth again after all, as he happens to newly consider it and view it in a different relation with the others: and so he restates it, to the confusion of somebody else in good time. As for adding to the original stock of truths,—impossible! Thus, you see the expression of them is the grand business:—you have got a truth in your head about the right way of governing people, and you took a mode of expressing it which now you confess to be imperfect. But what then? There is truth in falsehood, falsehood in truth. No man ever told one great truth, that I know, without the help of a good dozen of lies at least, generally unconscious ones. And as when a child comes in breathlessly and relates a strange story, you try to conjecture from the very falsities in it, what the reality was,—do not conclude that he saw nothing in the sky, because he assuredly did not see a flying horse there as he says,—so, through the contradictory

expression, do you see, men should look painfully for, and trust to arrive eventually at, what you call the true principle at bottom. Ah, what an answer is there! to what will it not prove applicable?—"Contradictions? Of course there were," say you!

Chiappino. Still, the world at large may call it inconsistency, and what shall I urge in reply?

Ogniben. Why, look you, when they tax you with tergiversation or duplicity, you may answer—you begin to perceive that, when all 's done and said, both great parties in the State, the advocators of change in the present system of things, and the opponents of it, patriot and anti-patriot, are found working together for the common good; and that in the midst of their efforts for and against its progress, the world somehow or other still advances: to which result they contribute in equal proportions, those who spend their life in pushing it onward, as those who give theirs to the business of pulling it back. Now, if you found the world stand still between the opposite forces, and were glad, I should conceive you: but it steadily advances, you rejoice to see! By the side of such a rejoicer, the man who only winks as he keeps cunning and quiet, and says, "Let yonder hot-headed fellow fight out my battle! I, for one, shall win in the end by the blows he gives, and which I ought to be giving"—even he seems graceful in his

avowal, when one considers that he might say, "I shall win quite as much by the blows our antagonist gives him, blows from which he saves me—I thank the antagonist equally!" Moreover, you may enlarge on the loss of the edge of party-animosity with age and experience . . .

Chiappino. And naturally time must wear off such asperities: the bitterest adversaries get to discover certain points of similarity between each other, common sympathies—do they not?

Ogniben. Ay, had the young David but sat first to dine on his cheeses with the Philistine, he had soon discovered an abundance of such common sympathies. He of Gath, it is recorded, was born of a father and mother, had brothers and sisters like another man,—they, no more than the sons of Jesse, were used to eat each other. But, for the sake of one broad antipathy that had existed from the beginning, David slung the stone, cut off the giant's head, made a spoil of it, and after ate his cheeses alone, with the better appetite, for all I can learn. My friend, as you, with a quickened eye-sight, go on discovering much good on the worse side, remember that the same process should proportionably magnify and demonstrate to you the much more good on the better side! And when I profess no sympathy for the Goliaths of our time, and you object that a large nature should sympathize with every form of intelligence, and see the good in it, how-

ever limited—I answer, "So I do; but preserve the proportions of my sympathy, however finelier or widelier I may extend its action." I desire to be able, with a quickened eye-sight, to descry beauty in corruption where others see foulness only: but I hope I shall also continue to see a redoubled beauty in the higher forms of matter, where already everybody sees no foulness at all. I must retain, too, my old power of selection, and choice of appropriation, to apply to such new gifts; else they only dazzle instead of enlightening me. God has his archangels and consorts with them: though he made too, and intimately sees what is good in, the worm. Observe, I speak only as you profess to think and, so, ought to speak: I do justice to your own principles, that is all.

Chiappino. But you very well know that the two parties do, on occasion, assume each other's characteristics. What more disgusting, for instance, than to see how promptly the newly emancipated slave will adopt, in his own favour, the very measures of precaution, which pressed soreliest on himself as institutions of the tyranny he has just escaped from? Do the classes, hitherto without opinion, get leave to express it? there follows a confederacy immediately, from which—exercise your individual right and dissent, and woe be to you!

Ogniben. And a journey over the sea to you! That is the generous way. Cry—"Emancipated slaves, the first

excess, and off I go!" The first time a poor devil, who has been bastinadoed steadily his whole life long, finds himself let alone and able to legislate, so, begins pettishly, while he rubs his soles, "Woe be to whoever brings anything in the shape of a stick this way!"—you, rather than give up the very innocent pleasure of carrying one to switch flies with,—you go away, to everybody's sorrow. Yet you were quite reconciled to staying at home while the governors used to pass, every now and then, some such edict as "Let no man indulge in owning a stick which is not thick enough to chastise our slaves, if need require!" Well, there are pre-ordained hierarchies among us, and a profane vulgar subjected to a different law altogether; yet I am rather sorry you should see it so clearly: for, do you know what is to—all but save you at the Day of Judgment, all you men of genius? It is this: that, while you generally began by pulling down God, and went on to the end of your life, in one effort at setting up your own genius in his place,—still, the last, bitterest concession wrung with the utmost unwillingness from the experience of the very loftiest of you, was invariably—would one think it?—that the rest of mankind, down to the lowest of the mass, stood not, nor ever could stand, just on a level and equality with yourselves. That will be a point in the favour of all such, I hope and believe.

Chiappino. Why, men of genius are usually charged,

I think, with doing just the reverse; and at once acknowledging the natural inequality of mankind, by themselves participating in the universal craving after, and deference to, the civil distinctions which represent it. You wonder they pay such undue respect to titles and badges of superior rank.

Ogniben. Not I (always on your own ground and showing, be it noted!) Who doubts that, with a weapon to brandish, a man is the more formidable? Titles and badges are exercised as such a weapon, to which you and I look up wistfully. We could pin lions with it moreover, while in its present owner's hands it hardly prods rats. Nay, better than a mere weapon of easy mastery and obvious use, it is a mysterious divining rod that may serve us in undreamed-of ways. Beauty, strength, intellect—men often have none of these, and yet conceive pretty accurately what kind of advantages they would bestow on the possessor. We know at least what it is we make up our mind to forego, and so can apply the fittest substitute in our power. Wanting beauty, we cultivate good humour; missing wit, we get riches: but the mystic unimaginable operation of that gold collar and string of Latin names which suddenly turned poor stupid little peevish Cecco of our town into natural lord of the best of us—a Duke, he is now—there indeed is a virtue to be reverenced!

Chiappino. Ay, by the vulgar: not by Messere Stiatta the poet, who pays more assiduous court to him than anybody.

Ogniben. What else should Stiatta pay court to? He has talent, not honour and riches: men naturally covet what they have not.

Chiappino. No, or Cecco would covet talent, which he has not, whereas he covets more riches, of which he has plenty, already.

Ogniben. Because a purse added to a purse makes the holder twice as rich: but just such another talent as Stiatta's, added to what he now possesses, what would that profit him? Give the talent a purse indeed, to do something with! But lo, how we keep the good people waiting! I only desired to do justice to the noble sentiments which animate you, and which you are too modest to duly enforce. Come, to our main business: shall we ascend the steps? I am going to propose you for Provost to the people; they know your antecedents, and will accept you with a joyful unanimity: whereon I confirm their choice. Rouse up! Are you nerving yourself to an effort? Beware the disaster of Messere Stiatta we were talking of! who, determining to keep an equal mind and constant face on whatever might be the fortune of his last new poem with our townsmen, heard too plainly "hiss, hiss, hiss," increase every moment. Till

at last the man fell senseless: not perceiving that the portentous sounds had all the while been issuing from between his own nobly clenched teeth, and nostrils narrowed by resolve.

Chiappino. Do you begin to throw off the mask?—to jest with me, having got me effectually into your trap?

Ogniben. Where is the trap, my friend? You hear what I engage to do, for my part: you, for yours, have only to fulfil your promise made just now within doors, of professing unlimited obedience to Rome's authority in my person. And I shall authorize no more than the simple re-establishment of the Provostship and the conferment of its privileges upon yourself: the only novel stipulation being a birth of the peculiar circumstances of the time.

Chiappino. And that stipulation?

Ogniben. Just the obvious one—that in the event of the discovery of the actual assailant of the late Provost . . .

Chiappino. Ha!

Ogniben. Why, he shall suffer the proper penalty, of course; what did you expect?

Chiappino. Who heard of this?

Ogniben. Rather, who needed to hear of this?

Chiappino. Can it be, the popular rumour never reached you . . .

Ogniben. Many more such rumours reach me, friend,

than I choose to receive; those which wait longest have best chance. Has the present one sufficiently waited? Now is its time for entry with effect. See the good people crowding about yonder palace-steps – which we may not have to ascend, after all. My good friends! (nay, two or three of you will answer every purpose)— who was it fell upon and proved nearly the death of your late Provost? His successor desires to hear, that his day of inauguration may be graced by the act of prompt bare justice we all anticipate. Who dealt the blow that night, does anybody know?

Luitolfo [*coming forward*]. I!

All. Luitolfo!

Luitolfo. I avow the deed, justify and approve it, and stand forth now, to relieve my friend of an unearned responsibility. Having taken thought, I am grown stronger: I shall shrink from nothing that awaits me. Nay, Chiappino—we are friends still: I dare say there is some proof of your superior nature in this starting aside, strange as it seemed at first. So, they tell me, my horse is of the right stock, because a shadow in the path frightens him into a frenzy, makes him dash my brains out. I understand only the dull mule's way of standing stockishly, plodding soberly, suffering on occasion a blow or two with due patience.

Eulalia. I was determined to justify my choice,

Chiappino,—to let Luitolfo's nature vindicate itself. Henceforth we are undivided, whatever be our fortune.

Ogniben. Now, in these last ten minutes of silence, what have I been doing, deem you? Putting the finishing stroke to a homily of mine, I have long taken thought to perfect, on the text, "Let whoso thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." To your house, Luitolfo! Still silent, my patriotic friend? Well, that is a good sign however. And you will go aside for a time? That is better still. I understand: it would be easy for you to die of remorse here on the spot and shock us all, but you mean to live and grow worthy of coming back to us one day. There, I will tell everybody; and you only do right to believe you must get better as you get older. All men do so: they are worst in childhood, improve in manhood, and get ready in old age for another world. Youth, with its beauty and grace, would seem bestowed on us for some such reason as to make us partly endurable till we have time for really becoming so of ourselves, without their aid; when they leave us. The sweetest child we all smile on for his pleasant want of the whole world to break up, or suck in his mouth, seeing no other good in it—would be rudely handled by that world's inhabitants, if he retained those angelic infantine desires when he had grown six feet high, black and bearded. But, little by little, he sees fit to forego claim after claim on the world,

puts up with a less and less share of its good as his proper portion; and when the octogenarian asks barely a sup of gruel and a fire of dry sticks, and thanks you as for his full allowance and right in the common good of life,—hoping nobody may murder him,—he who began by asking and expecting the whole of us to bow down in worship to him,—why, I say he is advanced, far onward, very far, nearly out of sight like our friend Chiappino yonder. And now—(ay, good-bye to you! He turns round the north-west gate: going to Lugo again? Good-bye!)—and now give thanks to God, the keys of the Provost's palace to me, and yourselves to profitable meditation at home! I have known *Four*-and-twenty leaders of revolts.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME

PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
LONDON

ROBERT BROWNING'S WORKS AND 'LIFE AND LETTERS.'

UNIFORM EDITION OF THE WORKS OF ROBERT BROWNING.

Seventeen Volumes, small crown 8vo., lettered separately, or in set binding, price 5s. each.

This Edition contains Three Portraits of Mr. Browning, at different periods of life, and a few Illustrations.

CONTENTS OF THE VOLUMES.

1. PAULINE: and SORDELLO.
2. PARACELSUS: & STRAFFORD.
3. PIPPA PASSES: KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES: THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES: and A SOUL'S TRAGEDY. With a Portrait of Mr. Browning.
4. A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON: COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY: and MEN AND WOMEN.
5. DRAMATIC ROMANCES: and CHRISTMAS EVE & EASTER DAY.
6. DRAMATIC LYRICS: and LURIA.
7. IN A BALCONY: and DRAMATIS PERSONÆ. With a Portrait of Mr. Browning.
8. THE RING AND THE BOOK. Books 1 to 4. With Two Illustrations.
9. THE RING AND THE BOOK. Books 5 to 8.
10. THE RING AND THE BOOK. Books 9 to 12. With a Portrait of Guido Franceschini.
11. BALAUSTION'S ADVENTURE; PRINCE HOHENSTIEL-SCHWANGAU, Saviour of Society: and FIFINE AT THE FAIR.
12. RED COTTON NIGHTCAP COUNTRY: and THE INN ALBUM.
13. ARISTOPHANES' APOLOGY, including a Transcript from Euripides, being the Last Adventure of Balaustion: and THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS.
14. PACCHIAROTTO, and How he Worked in Distemper; with other Poems: LA SAISIAZ: and THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC.
15. DRAMATIC IDYLS. First Series: DRAMATIC IDYLS, Second Series: and JOCOSERIA.
16. FERISHTAH'S FANCIES: and PARLEYINGS WITH CERTAIN PEOPLE OF IMPORTANCE IN THEIR DAY. With a Portrait of Mr. Browning.
17. ASOLANDO: Fancies and Facts; and BIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL NOTES TO THE POEMS.

SELECTION FROM THE POETICAL WORKS OF ROBERT BROWNING.

First Series. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. Second Series. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

Small fcp. 8vo. bound in half-cloth, with cut or uncut edges, price One Shilling.

POCKET VOLUME OF SELECTIONS FROM THE POETICAL WORKS OF ROBERT BROWNING.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF ROBERT BROWNING.

By MRS. SUTHERLAND ORR. With Portrait, and Steel Engraving of Mr. Browning's Study in De Vere Gardens. Second Edition. Crown 8vo. 12s. 6d.

London: SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 Waterloo Place.

WORKS
OF
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

UNIFORM EDITION.

Six Volumes, in set binding, small crown 8vo. 5s. each.

Volume 6.—'AURORA LEIGH'—can also be had bound as a separate volume.

This Edition is uniform with the 17-Volume edition of Mr. Robert Browning's Works. It contains the following Portraits and Illustrations:—

Portrait of Elizabeth Barrett Moulton-Barrett at the age of nine.
Coxhoe Hall, County of Durham.
Portrait of Elizabeth Barrett Moulton-Barrett in early youth.
Portrait of Mrs. Browning, Rome, February 1859.
Hope End, Herefordshire.
Sitting Room of Casa Guidi, Florence.
'May's Love,'—Facsimile of Mrs. Browning's Handwriting.
Portrait of Mrs. Browning, Rome, March 1859.
Portrait of Mrs. Browning, Rome, 1861.
The Tomb of Mrs. Browning in the Cemetery at Florence.

A SELECTION FROM THE POETRY OF ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

FIRST SERIES; crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* SECOND SERIES; crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

POEMS.

Small fcp. 8vo. half-cloth, cut or uncut edges, **1*s.***

EXTRACT FROM PREFATORY NOTE BY MR. ROBERT BROWNING.

'In a recent "Memoir of Elizabeth Barrett Browning," by JOHN H. INGRAM, it is observed that "such essays on her personal history as have appeared, either in England or elsewhere, are replete with mistakes or misstatements." For these he proposes to substitute "a correct if short memoir:" but, kindly and appreciative as may be Mr. Ingram's performance, there occur not a few passages in it equally "mistaken and misstated."'

London: SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 Waterloo Place.